LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

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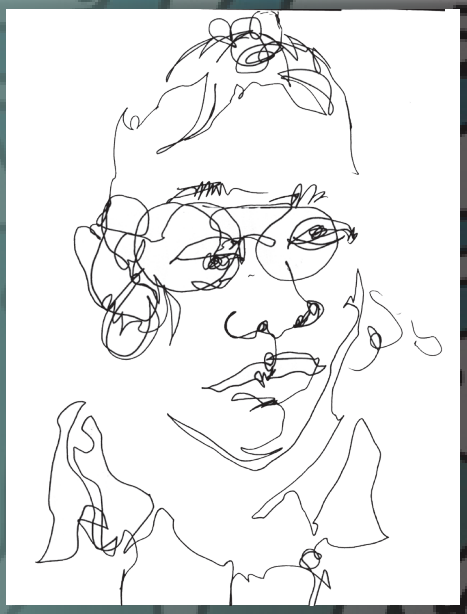
meetings
WEDNESDAYS @ 7 P.M.
IN THE ROAR CENTER
(GROUND FLOOR OF THE EMU)

Happy Spring!!! Even if it rains. Even if it doesn't. Even if your bike gets stolen. Even if your professor doesn't have a crush on you back. Happy Spring!!! Seasons are infinite just like anything that works in cycles but feelings don't last forever. They start and end. They revisit you like old friends after a falling-out. You revisit them. Sometimes you don't. Happy Spring!!! Hey, isn't being close to people subjectively and objectively the best feeling in the whole wide world? Wouldn't you say? Happy Transient Winter, hoisting itself up onto the train-car by the string hanging down and chugga-chug-ga-chugging out of town!!! Happy Infinite Spring!!!

— Dori Mosman, Co-Editor



Ladies and gentlemen, we are now floating in space,

We are now at the gates of infinity. If you haven't already done so, please stow your carry-on luggage underneath the seat in front of you or in an overhead bin. Please read this issue all the way through, front to back. And also make sure your seat back and folding trays are in their full upright position.

You are reading the best work from the best artists and writers in Eugene. Please enjoy, and remain calm as turbulence has been forecasted.

— Miles Shepard, Co-Editor

official stuff
OREGON VOICE is published as many times as we want per academic year. Any and all official or unofficial nonsense can be directed to the ROAR Center in the EMU or to oregonvoice@gmail.com.

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OREGON VOICE is an arts and culture magazine that strives to genuinely and eccentrically express the University of Oregon's voice and its relationship to the University. The program founded in 1989 and re-established in 2001, provides an opportunity for students to publish works of journalism, art, prose, poetry, and multimedia. Administration of the program is handled entirely by students.

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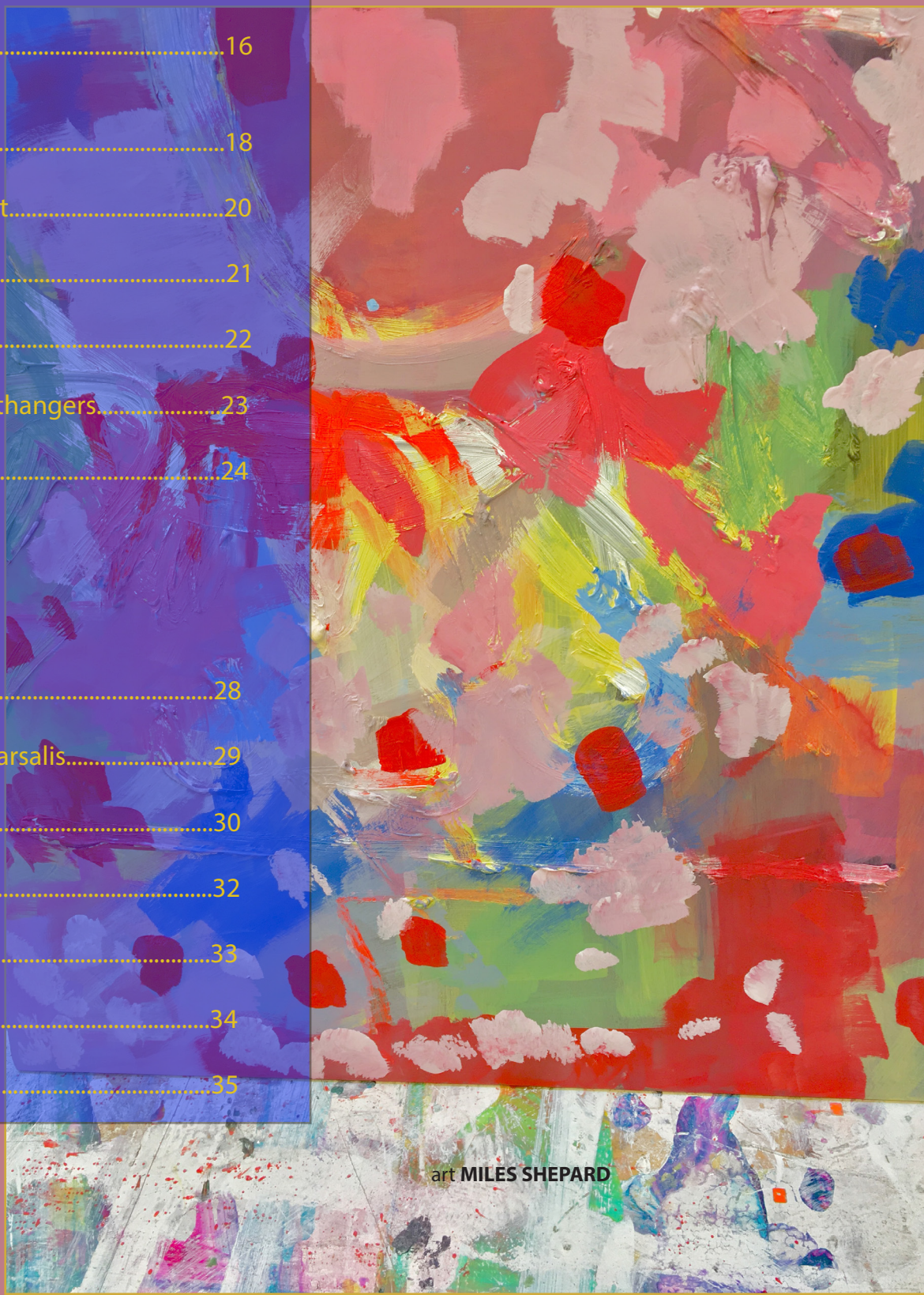


art **MILES SHEPARD**

REVIEWS

car seat headrest

I've missed Car Seat Headrest everytime they have come to Eugene, so this time I bought my ticket immediately, knowing that no matter what was going on that day I would see them this time around. I had heard about Car Seat Headrest when it was just a one man band, and I fell in love with Will Toledo's indie-rock prodigy story. He self-released ten albums as a college student, then, at age 23, signed to a label with three other band members with whom he has put out two more albums: *Twin Fantasy* and *Teens of Denial*. From recording in the backseat of his car to performing across the country, Toledo's is a rags-to-riches tale that's hard not to get wrapped up in.

When they performed at Wow Hall in early April, it was amazing to finally witness them live. Toledo is like if that awkward kid from the back corner of your English class with the early Beatles shag hair and square glasses were suddenly on stage singing and dancing. He is a seemingly shy and humble performer, but doesn't hold back in terms of passion; he will sing until his voice cracks. Even though he was just singing, you could tell that onstage he knew every note of every song he played. He has moved from playing multiple instruments, working solo, to a role closer to a composer and writer. The songs are not your typical lo-fi pop; it's clear that Toledo is trying to do something more dynamic and new with the song arrangements. The band was also joined by three musicians from the punk rock opening act, Naked Giants, which really boosted everyone's energy, onstage and off. Watching from off to the side the crowd was a sea of bobbing heads. There was no moshing, just a lot of jumping straight up and down. The music was so fun and upbeat, no one could keep from bouncing. The energy was so infectious, I walked away with an uncontrollable grin, bobbing down the street, riding the high of an incredible show.

words **ANNA MARIE BALDWIN**

BROCKHAMPTON

I have to admit I was late to BROCKHAMPTON.

I climb the stairs with the wane of their opening BOOGIE to reach a young crowd rumbling under yellow light. On the stage, Merlyn Wood delivers QUEER's second verse and hundreds of voices join in incantation. The boys are wearing their signature SATURATION III jumpsuits and I can't see the stage. Later, I learn they have an overstuffed couch, a vintage TV, and a large area rug; an homage to the shared home where they recorded the SATURATION trilogy. In this makeshift living room, the band delivers a performance as satisfying as their records. Though Kevin Abstract operates as the spokesman for the night—shouting call and response cues, answering (pointless) questions, yelling about being gay—the members of the band are sure to share the spotlight. They play a short set, with an acoustic feature from the enigmatic Bearface, and tell us they are done. I can't tell if I should believe them. From the stage, they seem to play games with the remaining fans, instructing sections to chant, or sing, or dance for them, to no apparent end. I wonder if they are testing our patience. I'm annoyed and still unsure if the show is over, but luckily, I stay and see an a capella encore from Abstract, followed by a full-bodied HEAT. The room is electric and I forget to be frustrated anymore—they did warn us they were a boy band—as I remember the point of the night: we are gay (among other things) and we are living and we are talking about it. But they don't play HOTTIE, so I cry I cry I cry.

words **ANNALEE NOCK**

4

a m e n d u n e s

The dream for Amen Dunes came later than most–a band that has churned out consistently good music since 2006 to limited attention. Suddenly, they international recognition for their new record, Freedom. Freedom is a dreamy foray deep into roots Americana that gets right at the core of what it's all about: the worker's collective aesthetic sense of identity. They played a brief set opening for Fleet Foxes at the Macdonald Theater, three songs that were performed beautifully but fell short of the album's promise and expectation of this chaotic cultural moment.

Then, the frontman of Fleet Foxes, Robin Pecknold took the stage. His unique presence filled the room and stayed with the audience for the duration of the three hour set, opening with a humble request of extra applause for Amen Dunes, who were apparently burdened by a dysfunctional monitor. It's often been said that Fleet Foxes lasting value is their manic commitment to avoid pretentious bullshit. This shines through on each of their records, especially their most recent and deeply personal Crack-up–but it really becomes a force of nature onstage. In the span of each single song, Pecknold and crew would switch between multiple instruments: acoustic bass to electric guitar, drumming while playing the trombone (still not sure how he pulled this off), piano to violin. At the same time you could always tell that Pecknold was having fun, very careful to avoid appearing strained. This all came together was at the very end of the set, tuning what must have been his eighth or ninth guitar. Before singing "Meadowlark" solo, he ventured into the first lines of The Magnetic Fields' "The Book Of love:" "The book of love is long and boring / nobody can…"

He trailed off, and the audience called out: "no one can lift the damn thing!" "Meadowlark" began and ended, his gentle commitment to indie rock and immaculately chiseled jaw remain.

words **MILES SHEPARD**

a f a n t a s t i c w o m a n

I hesitate to call Latin American fiction Magical Realism, but witnessing Daniela Vega on the screen is nothing short of magical. Marina (Vega) commands every moment, from the stage as a lounge singer to her battles with her partner's family. We first see Marina bathed in red light; her partner, Orlando, gifts her a trip for her birthday and she's in the middle of moving in with him. I would call it a whimsical film, if it wasn't for the harsh realities a trans woman like Marina faces.
Orlando dies, and everyone from doctors to his family is suspicious of her true motives. Why else would a well off older man be with someone so young? Considering the violence faced by trans women, why wouldn't she be the one who pushed him downstairs? But being a victim is not all that Marina is, because that's not just what any transgender woman is. It's refreshing to see the vast majority of the cast not misgender her, and the film never shows her genitals the way most media portrayals do. It's fantastic to watch the power she commands on screen.

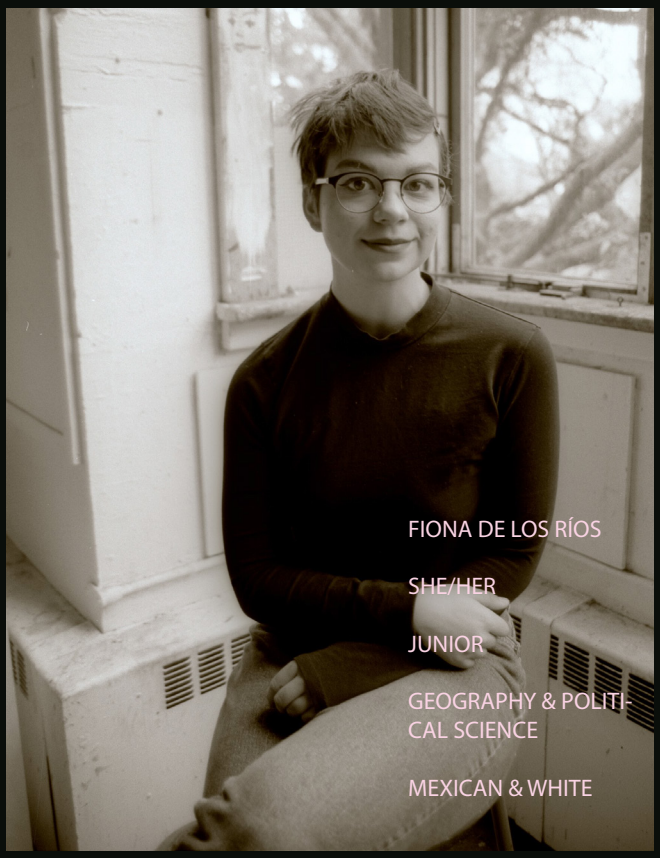
The motifs of red and mirrors give a glimpse of Marina's emotions, struggles, and strengths. It reminded me of *Alice and Wonderland*, which is where I think the magic realism fits in. There's a dream dance sequence in the same breath of a vicious hate crime committed against Marina. It's not hard to see how Orlando fell in love with her, bathed in red and fierce as hell. Marina gives a different option to those asking for representation, neither the hooker with a heart of gold nor dead within the first half of a movie. She's strong, passionate, and fantastic.

words **BIANCA SANDOVAL**

5

MIXED FEELINGS

words **FIONA DE LOS RÍOS**
photos **MIRANDA CAVAGNARO**



FIONA DE LOS RÍOS

SHE/HER

JUNIOR

GEOGRAPHY & POLITICAL SCIENCE

MEXICAN & WHITE

There is an interesting disjuncture when it comes to the representation of mixed people in media. On the one hand, there is justified critique that light-skin people of color, some of whom are mixed or biracial, get more opportunities than darker-skinned folks. Amandla Stenberg, for example, walked away from a role in Black Panther because they felt "there are spaces that [they] shouldn't take up" and that a biracial American actor taking the role of a dark-skinned character with a Nigerian accent would come off as disingenuous. At the same time, mixed people's identities are constantly questioned and invalidated. Yara Shahidi, the "Blackish" and "Grownish" star who is African American and Iranian, recently clapped back at Twitter users who felt that she benefited from having a lighter complexion. "It is a-okay to not watch the show… but on the basis of my 'racial ambiguity'? That neglects the fact that I am perceived as a young black girl in most any space I occupy." While Shahidi recognized the role that colorism plays in her community, she also took a strong stance in defense of her Black identity. In my experience taking college courses on race and ethnicity, there is also a strange lack of literature on mixed identity.

This project emerged as part of my eternal ethnic identity crisis and my journey to connect with people who share a similar experience. I am half white American and half Mexican, and I grew up in San Jose, which ranks seventh on the list of top ten most diverse cities in the U.S. The Bay Area has its own issues, but it was a huge culture shock to come to Eugene. My first year in college was marked by depression, in large part because I felt very uncomfortable with the whiteness of 'my new home' and the state's history of white supremacy, unbeknownst to me and even to people who grew up in Oregon. I have always been curious to know how other mixed people have adapted and reacted to this environment. I put out a call for contribution via Facebook to anyone who identified as mixed and was willing to be interviewed about their life experiences and what it is like to be mixed on a majority-white campus.

BIANCA PAK

SHE/HER

FRESHMAN

POLITICAL SCIENCE & GSS

CHINESE & WHITE

TAYLOR KISSINGER

JUNIOR

SHE/HER

JOURNALISM & ADVERTISING

FILIPINO & WHITE

A big theme among all the people I interviewed was this feeling of being too ___ or not ___ enough. All participants identify as people of color, but for some, this has been a more recent development. Kaya Noteboom said that they were in denial about their identity for a long time. They used to say, "I'm Filipino, but I'm mostly white," though this was more of a qualifier than an accurate description of their background. Mary Vertulfo now identifies as a woman of color although she used to struggle with the label. She was afraid of identifying as Filipino because she feels more culturally aligned with her mother and American culture, but she says that's not the case anymore. "There are a million ways to be a person of color." Daisy Batten is racially Mexican but was adopted into a white family. She describes herself as both culturally white and culturally Mexican. "I wasn't raised with two different cultures, but I have two different cultures." I particularly liked how Taylor Kissinger explained what it's like to be mixed: "I am fully Filipino, and I am fully white. You can't split my experience in half."

I asked interviewees how they feel about the term 'white passing.' Kaya told me, "I have mixed feelings about it." Lighter-skinned people of color experience less discrimination and are given more opportunities, but "having your identity erased is a bad experience. Being white passing is another experience of being a person of color. It's not a lesser experience." Bianca Sandoval expressed how she doesn't really know if she's white passing since people identify her differently depending on her location. Growing up in predominantly Latinx communities in Los Angeles and Nevada, she got made fun of for not speaking Spanish:

"You don't look Mexican and don't sound Mexican, but you act Mexican." Things changed when she came to Eugene. People here immediately identify her as Mexican, or at least brown, and it makes her feel "super Mexican." She finds herself modifying her behavior to better fit in: needing to sound "hood enough" at home and stopping herself from sounding "too Mexican" at UO. Mia Vicino talked about feeling like other people see her as "off-white" and racially ambiguous, and she has often asked her friends if she looks Asian. "It's super weird having to rely on other people to form a sense of yourself. But at the same time, identity is, I guess, public. It's based off of what other people see you as."

Mary said that in some ways, she feels like being racially ambiguous is a gift because "nobody can make assumptions about you if they can't pin you down. But I can tell my friends who are white passing struggle more than me in many ways—they've told me that their ethnic groups have either overtly or subtly discounted their authenticity, which has encouraged them to abandon their non-whiteness altogether and just conform." My opinion on 'white passing' aligns closely with Daisy's: "It's more important how you act when you're white passing… Don't use it as a costume or a way to say, 'Oh, by the way, I'm brown.'" It's frustrating to see people who pass as white using their identity when it's convenient without having to face the negative consequences that many other POC experience daily. Kaitlyn McCafferty said that "passing appearance-wise can be difficult to discern" but they know that if they apply for a job, they have a name "that you won't associate with any kind of stereotype."

I have only recently started attending MEChA meetings because I have always felt like I didn't fit in as a mixed Latina. This sentiment was echoed by the participants. Language was a barrier for several people.

Mary tried to join the Filipino Student Union, but "the first question they asked was whether or not I spoke Tagalog, and so I realized I didn't actually fit in… That was a really shitty feeling. I felt like my own understanding of Filipino-ness was wrong." Bianca Pak says that though APASU has been very welcoming, she has internalized a feeling that her participation is less legitimate because she only has half of the experiences: "I constantly feel uncomfortable with groups like that because I am biracial and because it feels like I can't relate in the same ways." Kaya attended Muxeres because their friend is involved with the group, and they felt welcome there as a brown person even though they are not Latinx. They have never attended an APASU meeting, however, perhaps because they are still distancing themself from their Asian identity. Bianca Sandoval mentioned how she and her friends also dislike the "gatekeeping" that happens in these student groups that requires people to meet certain standards and have certain experiences to be a part of it. Taylor has found community through Newman Center more so than other groups on campus.

Most everyone said that they have not personally experienced overt/blatant racism at UO, but they've all had to deal with microagressions and ignorance from peers and faculty. Bianca Sandoval did say that a taxi driver tried to hit her and her friend with his car around the time of Trump's election. (This is not the first time a UO student has told me that a Trump supporter tried to run them over.) Taylor and Mia both brought up instances when strangers asked them, "What are you?" or, "Where are you from?" completely out of the blue. As many participants expressed, it can be tiring and even intimidating to be the only brown person in class to bring up issues of race, especially when white men take up so much space in the classroom. Daisy is much more comfortable speaking up: "I've definitely been that person because I want people to be aware, and if it has to be in an assertive way, that's okay for me." More than one person said that they normally just deal with microagressions and then vent about it later when they're around their friends and other POC.

For some interviewees, Eugene was actually an upgrade in diversity. Kaitlyn, for example, grew up in Grants Pass and they were happy to come to a place that was less white than their hometown.

Still, they said, "If I hang around with white people for too long, sometimes I get very tired, even if they're really nice and understanding people." Friendships can be a source of frustration or comfort. As Daisy said, "It's easier and less emotional work to be friends with another POC" because they get it. For Kaya, it can be hard because most of their friends are white, and they are sometimes surprised when their friends are not as aware as they thought.

Some of the biggest interpersonal issues come up in romantic relationships. Kaya and Bianca Sandoval named past experiences in which they felt fetishized by their partners. Kaya has felt that if someone was attracted to them, it was in spite of not being white, and they still deal with a lot of self-hate around their ethnic identity. This has led them to pursue relationships with mostly white people. One of their high school partners always wanted to talk about anime, and they often felt like they were "part of his weeaboo fantasy."

White men have told Bianca Sandoval that they "never dated a brown girl before," and they make comments about the size of her butt because she's Latina.

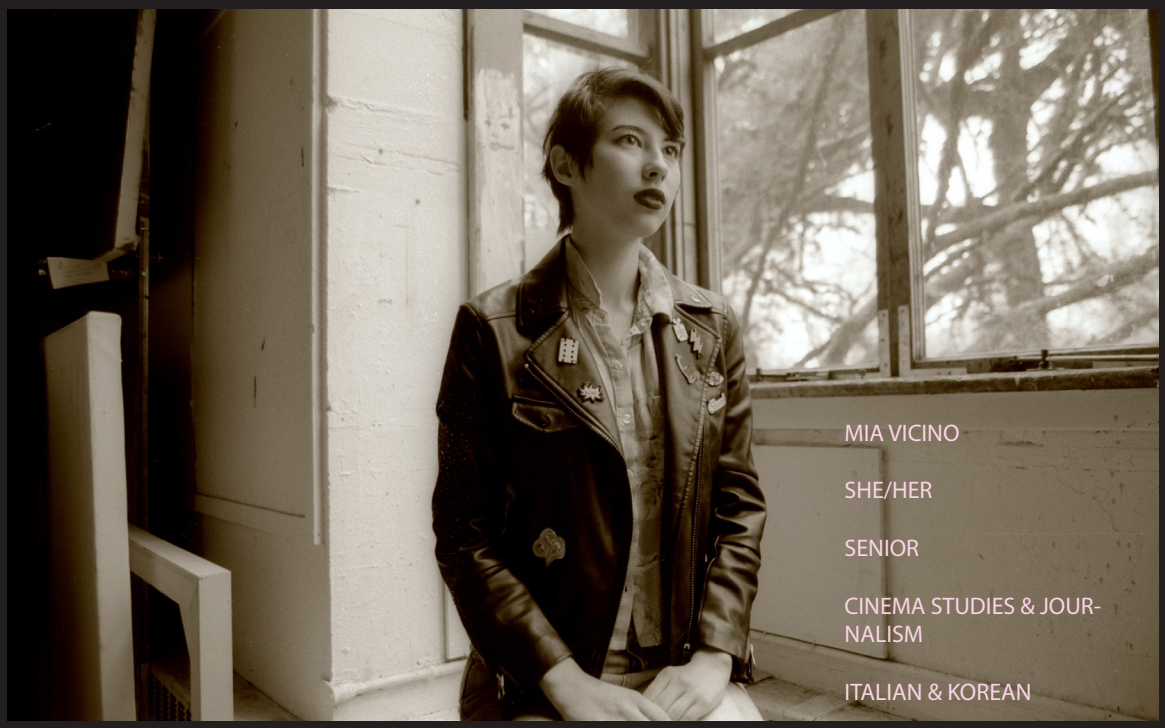
Mia recalled a partner in high school who referred to her as Kim Jong Il (or Kim Jong Un, she couldn't remember).

At the beginning of Kaitlyn's current relationship, their partner told them that he was worried he was fetishizing them, and though they were willing to have that conversation, they wish it wasn't one they had to have. "I didn't think I was going to be in a relationship with a white person because that's not part of like, 'the plan.' So, that's really weird, having those discussions with someone that you're attached to."

Daisy and Mary both broke up with white partners who were culturally unaware. Daisy's current partner is Mexican, and she thinks she'll end up with someone who is Mexican or POC because she doesn't want her culture to get lost.

Mary's partner is white, but she can have honest and important conversations with him about privilege.

Taylor has only ever dated POC, and her current partner is mixed. Though she doesn't feel attracted to people based on race, she does think that cultural awareness and the way someone was brought up play a big role in her friendships.



Everyone I interviewed has an artistic or creative outlet to grapple with their identity. Mia does a lot of acting and writing, and she wants to bring better representation of Asian and mixed people to the industry. Kaitlyn said that they got into K-pop in high school, and it has a big Asian-American fan base. They also had a good English teacher in high school who inspired them to write. Bianca Pak recently took an autobiographical writing class, and it was an opportunity to explore her background. Daisy loves to watercolor and has made a lot of art centering around la mestiza, a woman who is a self-portrait and also generally represents mestiza women of Spanish and Indigenous descent. Bianca Sandoval writes poetry, and Taylor loves to write about diversity in her journalism. Kaya and Mary are comic artists.

Mary recently received distinction for a beautiful animated film she created for her undergraduate thesis. Mary says, "I make a lot of work about dogs. Aspins—Filipino street dogs. They're mixed breeds. I used to call myself a mutt! It's funny. In the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, they started allowing mutts to compete in agility competitions… but they don't call them mutts. They call them 'All-Americans.'" I think that's just sweet.

Being mixed is, as Kaya says, "its own thing," apart from being one ethnicity or another. Though it sounds cliché, we really do not fit into neat little boxes. We come from a variety of different places and backgrounds. Many of us share the same insecurities and identity struggles,

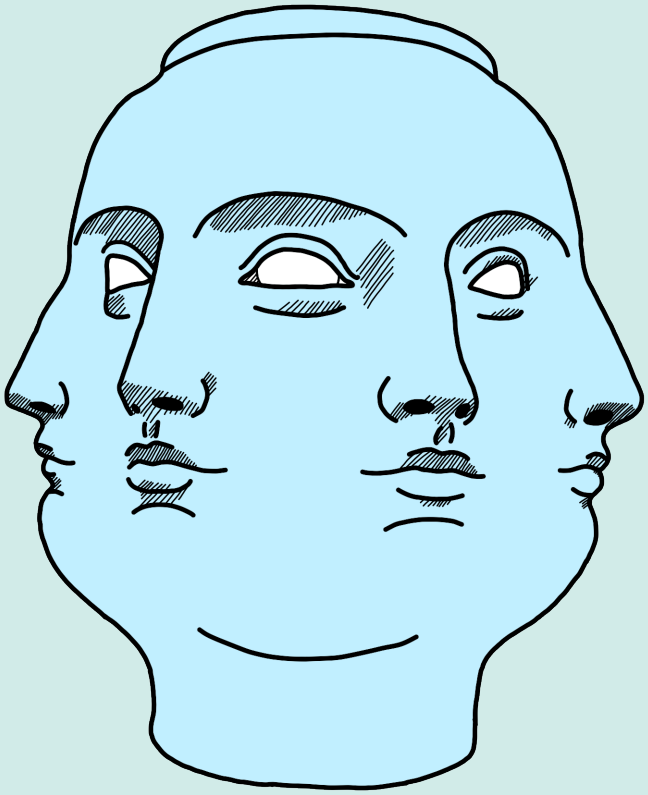
but they often manifest themselves in different ways. These experiences represent only a handful of people, so there are many more stories to be heard. I come out of this feeling a deep appreciation for the other mixed kids out there. We covered so much that I don't feel like I am doing their stories justice, but I hope you got something good out of it as a reader, too.

Brushing Infinity w

Mark Unno is an Associate Professor at the University of Oregon specializing in East Asian Religions, Japanese Buddhism, and Comparative Religion, among a vast array of interests. As a Religious Studies minor, I had the pleasure of taking Unno's Religious Studies 353: "Dark Self, East and West" last term. This course is quite popular—and for good reason. The Dark Self explores what it means to be human. Not only is Mark Unno extremely intelligent, but he also possesses uniquely deep empathy for his students and an awareness of shifting social paradigms rarely found in university professors. I would recommend the course to anyone. *The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

DD: How would you define infinity: religious, academic, personal, life, world, space?

MU: I want to tell a brief story about one of the historical Buddha's sermons. So, this is 2500 years ago, it's the founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha, and there was a disciple who asked him: is the world finite or is it infinite? What is the nature of karma? When someone becomes enlightened and they escape the cycle of birth and death, is there one less sentient being in the universe? And the Buddha, instead of directly answering, told a parable. He said, "There was once a man who was shot by a poison arrow that was directed at him by an enemy. His comrades rushed up to him and said, 'We need to pull out the arrow immediately or you'll die.' And he said, 'Oh, thank you so much. Please do so. But, before you pull out the arrow, there's a few things I need to know. I need to know: who was the man? What was his name? What village did he come from? Who were his parents? What kind of poison was put on the arrow?'" And the Buddha said, "Well, before they could find out and give him the answers, he died." From a Buddhist perspective, the real issue is how to alleviate the problem of universal suffering in human existence. If [you] pursue answers to these metaphysical questions, then you'll lose your focus [on] the main thing, which is different in every religion—like sin in Christianity, or being in harmony with the Dao in Daoism, or liberation from suffering in Buddhism. In the case of Buddhism, the main project is liberation from suffering. So that's the Buddha's answer. He refused to acknowledge [whether the world is finite or infinite].



DD: So, if not by pursuing the question directly, if you can't figure it out by asking it, then how would you go about discovering [whether the universe is finite or infinite]?

MU: In this case, by applying oneself to the Buddhist practice in order to alleviate one's suffering. Then, if [the question of a finite vs. infinite universe] is relevant, as a secondary or auxiliary concern, then the nature of the universe might become clear. Certainly other religions may have different views on this. Followers of other religions might say, "The ultimate nature of reality is divine and the divine is infinite." Let's refer to another story from Zhuangzi and Daoism. In one exchange between a Daoist master named Wang Ni and his disciple named Nie Que, the disciple wants to know: "Master, how can one know something?" And the master, Wang Ni, throws it back at him. Nie Que asked Wang Ni, "Do you know of something that all things agree in calling right?" "How would I know that?" said Wang Ni. "Do you know that you don't know it?" "How would I know that?" "Then do things know nothing?" "How would I know that?" "However, suppose I try saying something—what way do I have of knowing that if I say I know something, I don't actually *not* know it? Or what way do I have of knowing that if I say I don't know something, that I don't really, in fact, know it?" So, just because an authority, whether it's a religious figure or professor, says such-and-so or I say the universe is infinite, it might not mean anything. Right?

It's interesting to think about Kierkegaard in this case because he defines the divine as infinite. But why would we believe Kierkegaard or not believe Kierkegaard? Well, we learn something about Kierkegaard, who's a Christian thinker, and what he believes, but by itself it doesn't give us any access to the infinite. So for Kierkegaard what's required is faith or belief, but faith or belief in this case isn't blind faith or blind belief. In his case, it involves some awareness; a twofold awareness. On the one hand, the awareness that human knowledge and especially reason is limited. But a human being can't recognize that his or her knowledge is limited or finite unless he or she is being illuminated by some larger reality. Which is kind of… I think the term here that Kierkegaard doesn't use but I think is apropos is "mystery." So when you have a sense of the mystery of the universe, that mystery is experiential and that experience of mystery comes because it occurs at the boundary between the limits of my finite knowledge and my awareness of something beyond my finite knowledge. Mystery is both a category of ignorance and of knowing. It's mysterious because I don't fully know it but it feels mysterious because I have a glimpse or inkling of something beyond. So I think it's something like that that Kierkegaard is indicating, in terms of how he sees the self and what we might call the epistemology of faith: how does faith relate to knowing the divine if the divine is infinite and beyond finite human reason? Faith is almost an organ of a different mode of knowing rather than simply blind belief.

So there's two ways to think about infinity in this regard. Infinity as like a quantity. That we can imagine there's a dozen eggs, and then what if we have, you know, a dozen cartons of a dozen eggs, then it's 144 eggs, what if we have a room full of egg cartons and what if it fills the whole universe, that seems like an awfully large number that is akin to infinite. So it's imagining the infinite as an extension. But there's another way to think about the infinite which is that it's qualitatively different from anything that we can count. So another way to think of that is: infinite is virtually synonymous with immeasurable. Immeasurable has an affinity which is the notion of being unbounded. Something that's unquan-

words **DAGNY DANIEL**
art **HANNAH SMULAND**

tifiable is bounded. But something that is immeasurable is unbounded. So, there it's not a horizontal extension of quantity, but it's a vertical shift that represents a qualitative difference. And that's reflected in both these stories of the poison arrow and of the limits of linear, categorical thinking and knowing that's made fun of in this exchange and what the Daoists really call the "boundless Dao," which is that [which is] beyond words. So there's more than one modality to knowing, and you have to shift out of knowing that's based on linear thinking, linear logic, categorical thinking, quantitative thinking. You have to shift out of that into a qualitative knowing that's unbounded. And there's an aspect of that that's a realization, that's experiential. So that's the stories of Woodworker Qing, that's the stories of Cook Ding, in the Zhuangzi. It seems to be indicated in the mystery of faith as expressed by Kierkegaard and enlightenment or awakening in Buddhism.

DD: Have you had an experience like that?

MU: That's an interesting question. Because what happens when a person is awakened? If something that's unbounded or beyond quantification is the true nature of reality, then it's the true nature of the Self. And when a person awakens to the true nature of the Self that's infinite or immeasurable or unbounded, then they awaken to the true nature of the Subject, but at that point, who is the one who is awakened? Is it the finite being in a finite body and a finite mind? Or is it the unbounded reality that has penetrated, in some views, especially in Buddhism, the illusion of a seperate and finite self? So there might potentially be a little bit of a problem in the formation of the question itself. Or, another way to put it is, the answer is in the question. That no matter how much you ask other people, you can't get close to the question. First because the question is ill-formed. But the real problem is not that it's ill-formed in the contours of the question but it's directed in the wrong direction. You need to look within, and it's not just that you'll find the answer within, it's that you'll discover that the question is the answer.

DD: What do you think about time as a human construct, or as something that exists independently? Do you think humans synthesize information in a linear fashion in order to understand it when really that's not the way, ultimately, that it works?

MU: In our intellectual culture, there's a widespread view that we're in a period of what's called the Postmodern or Post-Colonial. And sometimes people even say the Post-Human. There are potentially big problems with all of these categories, but what all of them share to a certain extent is the concept of the social construction of reality. That how we see people and things and society is really a construction of human culture and especially of the human mind. And for that reason we can shift out of inappropriate constructions and readjust our lens and have more appropriate constructions. And just briefly, this is a little bit off-topic, but there are two ramifications of this. One is there's no single construction, there's no single story that can encompass all of human culture. Because every person, peoples, group's lense is a little different. So, if you allow each group to tell their own story, then they're not going to fit together seamlessly. There are going to be gaps and there are going to be some conflicts and contradictions between all these different stories. So first let's try to get away from coming up with one grand story, what's called a dominant narrative, that represented the project of the modern West. The project of modernity was a sort of grand story that everybody could fit into. One movement has been to get away from the "one grand story," and then the second movement, which is inseparable, is "let's have many different stories." This has led to saying...each people and each group and each culture should be able to tell their own story.

But, the idea that we're all part of the same history and yet sharing different stories has undergirded a lot of post-modernism, post-colonialism, and post-humanism. They don't usually question the shared basis of time. They question the shared basis of space! But from some of the readings we've done in the course I think we can see that different peoples and different religions and different times and different philosophies have had very different conceptions of time. So it's not only that we need to call into question different views of space, but we also need to question and allow our conversations, our discourse, into different models of time. And if we do that, time becomes relative and almost necessarily we have to treat time as a social construction. Is it cyclical? Is it linear? Or, in the Daoist view, whether it's cyclical or historical, these are really human views of time. The farther we go away from human civilization and the need for a clock and the further we go out into nature, the more time begins to become momentary rather than cyclical or linear. It's just moment-to-moment. There is no time out in nature. We could say there's a rhythm of seasons, but why is that significant? For human beings it's significant because early on that matches the agricultural cycle and allows human beings to plan for one year. Planting and harvesting. But animals don't have that, non-human animals don't have that. Non-human animals are not conscious of time that they can reflect back on as circular, cyclical, or linear. They still want to eat at the same time, they still want to mate in the spring, but they're not looking at a watch. In that sense time is much more momentary for non-human animals. It's like, here's the earth, this is what I need to do: sleep, eat, mate… It's happening now.

So, what is the ideal time for human beings? That's the interesting question. What allows us to know most fully and to live most fully? But along with that question also arises, well, what about death? And then arises the question, what kind of time allows us to live most fully and die most fully? There's different kinds of linear time. So, the Confucians have a kind of a linear view of time but it's different from our Western view of time. The Confucian view of time begins with the Golden Age and everything is downhill from there. That tends to be the Asian view. The Hindus have a concept of the Kaliyuga, which is that as more time passes, religions decline and society declines. That's because in the beginning there were the greatest gurus but eventually things become more corrupt, religion becomes more corrupt, society becomes more corrupt. And so the practice of the high meditation of the great gurus is no longer applicable to our time. People have to follow more faith-based practices, more devotional practices, in the Kaliyuga. That's also repeated in Buddhism. The Buddhists have the theory of the Three Ages and the decline of the Dharma, the practice of the Dharma, where in the beginning, with the practice of the Shakyamuni where the elite, enlightened practitioners all became enlightened gives way to a period of what's called the Semblance Dharma. People look like they're studying and practicing Buddhism but very few become enlightened. And then you have the Final Age, which is the longest age. There's many different categorizations but typically it's 500 years of the Pure Dharma, 1,000 years of the Semblance Dharma, and 10,000 years of the Final, decadent Dharma when people are not practicing and they start forgetting the Buddhist teachings. So what's appropriate for that time? The practice of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan adopts the narrative that the chanting of the name of the cosmic Buddha Amida is most appropriate and most effective for the Final Age. So Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism all share this view that perfection lies in the past and

everything goes down from there. But, ultimately, in the Indian context (Buddhism is Indian) this view of decline is like if you took a small chunk out of a circle and it looks relatively linear but everything is a grand cycle that comes back to the beginning over and over and over. The Confucians don't necessarily have that view; the Confucians have the view that perfection is the past and we have declined so we have to try to rectify the present, reform the present, return it to the Golden Age of the great sages.

The Western view of linear time is different. The Western view of linear time is always that "the best is yet to come." And it's not that that idea is absent in Confucianism or Hinduism or Buddhism, it's just that the primary emphasis is on the Golden Age in the past, whereas the modern Western view is a utopian vision heavily influenced by Christianity. Jesus says in the Gospels, "The kingdom of God is near at hand." Well, near at hand means it's not here yet. And he dies on the cross before it's here! So that's where the idea of the Second Coming comes [from] and that's where the view toward the future comes [from].

The modern Western linear view of time is not just that it's linear, it's that perfection lies in the future. Which is very different from most Asian religions. And even when Western society became secularized, it retained these features of the Christian historical outlook in two main forms. One is Marxism. The Marxist view is that eventually the proletariat, the working class, will recognize the corruption of the upper classes, the ruling elite, and the bourgeois, and will instigate a violent uprising that will overturn everything and create an egalitarian society in which there's no private ownership. And that's communism.

And once we have the inevitable communist revolution take place, then human society will reach its true fulfillment in an egalitarian, communitarian society. Which never really happened. I mean, China and the Soviet Union were the two large countries that adopted communist ideology, but it didn't really work out that way.

And then the other sort of form that [Christian emphasis on futurity] took is free market capitalism. And as it turns out, historically, free market capitalism has won out. Russia and also China retain, at an official level, some degree of communist ideology. But both of them are driven by a free market economy. Free market capitalism, that's what drives their economies now. So it won out. And the success has been incredible in the advancement of technology, in lessening global poverty, in a lot of areas. But the fallout also has been enormous.

DD: What can you tell me about the relationship between life and death? And then, infinity in that sense?

MU: Life and death are related to infinity in two ways, one could say. One way is that death represents the infinite because it represents the unknown. Infinite in this sense doesn't mean a quantification but it means undefined, undefinable. Undefined and therefore undefinable. Death is like the final frontier in that sense. It's unknown, therefore it's unquantifiable, therefore it could be regarded as infinite. The other way to regard the relationship between life, death, and infinity is to say life and death together are related to the infinite because life and death are both finite categories. A person is born in such-and-such time and they give up their life. But if, for example, as we find in Buddhism and, in a different context, Daoism and also in Hinduism, time is regarded in this way, this finite way, "a person is born and then they die on a certain day in a certain time and in a certain place," that's really a kind of illusion. What Buddhists and Hindus call *maya*, which is a word for both illusion and dream. Then the true nature of both life and death lie beyond these categories themselves. Beyond words, beyond quantification, and therefore unbounded and infinite in some way. And that it's really gaining some knowledge of that that constitutes true knowledge of life and true knowledge of death—that's the only way one gains access to that. But one can't know the infinite intellectually, one has to

enter into it as a realization, experientially. But at that point the experiencing subject is no longer the finite subject, that's the tricky part.

DD: So then, what advice would you give to someone who fears death or someone who's mourning the death of someone close to them?

MU: Right, so those two are related but different—fear of death and grieving. Different religions have different views of grieving but I think most religions treat grieving as integral to human experience. So, I'm not saying all religions say this, but if it's true that grieving is integral to all religions and also maybe some non-religious philosophies, if it's considered natural, then one could say it should be treated as natural. And what that means is that it only becomes a problem, grieving somebody's death only becomes a real problem when it's either artificially suppressed or unnecessarily prolonged. If it's true that grieving is a natural process, the most important thing is to allow it to come and then allow it to leave. It's not going to be easy, but it's natural.

That's different from fear of death. What's important to think about in terms of fear of death is: what's the real fear? There's fear of physical pain at the point of death, which could be considerable, but isn't necessarily the case. There's lots of people who don't experience much if any pain as they die. And then there's fear of the emotional pain. The primary fear in terms of emotional pain, they're kind of two sides of the same coin, is loss of world and fear of the unknown. So, loss of world is, "I'm going to lose everything that I love, that makes my world and therefore makes me who I am: my family, my friends." Mostly, that's what it usually comes down to. So the question then becomes: can religions, can different philosophies find a way to alleviate that concern of loss of world? The sense of isolation and loneliness. And, sometimes, it can be intense anxiety and fear. Different religions and philosophies have different ways of addressing it. And it's simply a question of: is this convincing or not? Is the story convincing or not? And to what extent can the story be experienced before a person dies? Does the Buddha's enlightenment at the age of 35 and his realization of nirvana mean that he already experienced something beyond life and death at that point? So when he actually died at the age of 80, there was no fear or anxiety because in a way he had already experienced death. He had pre-experienced death.

So, it's partially a problem of a convincing story, but a convincing story that one can inhabit. And in some cases a convincing story tells people,

"You've already been able to inhabit it."

And then the other is really just fear of the unknown. So the fear is heightened if the fear of the unknown dictates that, "The result of death is eternal." Like, eternal salvation versus eternal damnation. That's a tough one. Well, one common Buddhist version [of the story] is there's 33 heavens, *tritrimpsa*, or 9 hells. That's a more optimistic view, because there's more heavens than hells. But, remember that the ultimate goal is not to be born in heaven but to escape the cycle of birth and death altogether. But even if you're born in one of the heavens, at some point you're going to have to come down because you're going to wear out the energy, the good karma, that got you to that heaven and then you're going to have to go back down. And even if you end up in hell, you're going to wear out the energy of that hell and eventually you're going to be able to rise up. In fact, in Mahayana Buddhism, there's a Bodhisattva waiting in every hell to help the denizens of that hell get out of that hell and get a better rebirth. So that's part of the larger story of Buddhism and time, which is a cyclical view: you never get stuck anywhere! But the biggest fear in Buddhism is you're going to be repeating these cycles over and over, it becomes an endless nightmare. The nightmare starts to impinge on the pleasant dreams. Because if you're having the pleasant dream, which is being god in a high heaven, then you have this creeping feeling that, "Uh-oh, my time's coming to a close and I'm going to end up in one of the hells or lower realms." So it starts to infect, it starts to stain or defile, all of the rebirths because you realize, "I'm going to have to give this up at some point." Even when you have a pleasant birth. That's why the goal is ultimately to escape the whole darn thing altogether.

Different religions have different stories. What happened in the history of Catholicism is interesting because purgatory wasn't there from the beginning. The goal in Catholicism is the ascent to heaven and the experience of the beatitudes, the glory of heaven and the singing angels. But what if you feel like, "Well, I've done too many bad things to make it up into heaven, then am I just damned to hell?" I can't remember exactly when, I think it was the Middle Ages, they came up with purgatories. "Well, you're not so horrible that you're going to be destined to go to hell, but you do have some cleaning up to do." And that's purgatory.

So, there it's interesting. Is that a theological fact? Is it built into the universe, is it structural? Or is it a social construction of the Catholic faith? Depending on whether you have an insider's perspective or an outsider's perspective, purgatory looks a bit different to you. But, whatever story you adopt, it's a question of how convincing the story is and how inhabitable the story is. And part of what's important about the habitability of the story is to what extent can you have a vicarious or an actual experience of what that story is before you have to enter that story? And the more real that story feels to you, vicariously or experientially, before you get there, the easier it becomes to commit to that story. That's all it is.

[If you are interested in the class topics covered in this interview, my favorites from the course included the Zhuangzi, Shinmon Aoki's *Coffinman*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, and Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. The films *Jacob's Ladder*, *Antonia's Line*, and *Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall… and Spring Again* were all very impactful as well. And, of course, take a class with Mark Unno if you can. I'm deeply grateful to him for speaking with me.]

PLASTIC IS

Plastic encases almost everything we buy and consume. The plastics we use and dispose of every day are made from crude oil, coal, and cellulose. They're made of long chains of repeating molecules called polymers. Their highly moldable and durable qualities make plastics ideal for producing consumer goods, but the waste created by plastics and the time it takes to decompose is unethical and unsustainable. Plastic bags take 1,000 years to decompose, and plastic bottles take 450 or more.

I had a naive, optimistic worldview of recycling where I assumed we recycled plastics because it was the right thing to do. Unfortunately, I didn't realize we shipped our plastics overseas to be recycled and then sold back to us in the form of consumer goods. Every year, the United States ships 1.42 million tons of scrap plastic to China, making it one of our largest exports. China began importing foreign waste in the 1980's to fuel their growing manufacturing economy, but now they are trying to clean up their air and land. They happily bought any and all materials from all over the world, and many countries became entirely dependant on China for their recycling needs. In 2016, Ireland exported 95 percent of their waste to China. In China, as well, entire communities were centered on recycling plants, where generations would sort through the dirty and hazardous materials for a living. They recycled the waste and sold it back to us in the form of plastic goods.

For the last several years, though, China has been starting to phase out of their role as a global waste bin. Growing nationalism and pride as a world power has put pressure on Beijing to stop buying foreign waste from the West. In 2013, they started Operation Green Fence, which sought to limit the waste being purchased to only high quality materials. Starting January 1, 2018, China banned 24 types of foreign waste in their "National Sword" policy, citing contaminants and low quality plastics. The environmental ministry of China explained that the recycling materials were dirty and sometimes even hazardous, which negatively impacts China's goals to clean up its air and land. This is creating a huge increase in recyclables stateside, and local waste plants don't know how to handle it. The United States doesn't have the infrastructure to recycle most materials that we used to export to China, nor do we have the industry that would warrant a market for recycled raw materials.

In Oregon, 12 plants have gotten permission to simply dump recyclables because they have nowhere else to go. The West Coast will be especially impacted by the ban because it historically has been cheap and easy to send waste on shipping containers to the coast of China, by putting the recycling materials on ships that would otherwise be empty as they returned back to China to load up more consumer goods. Meanwhile, on the voyage over, many plastics just fall into the ocean, adding to the toxic slew that is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, an area in the North Pacific where the currents bring together plastic waste from all over the oceans in a mass greater than 1.6 million square kilometers, an area too large to comprehend. It is a vast, shifting sea of plastic islands and microscopic bits, which lead to water that is toxic and unable to support life. Once plastic is submerged in water, it no longer decomposes, only breaks into smaller and smaller pieces forever until they become less than 5 mm microplastics. Animals become tangled in fishing lines, swallow plastic bags, and are trapped in the toxic sludge. The ingestion of microscopic plastics block their intestines, and the plastic decomposing in the water releases toxic chemicals. The plastics accumulate pollutants, and when ingested by sea animals, travel up the food chain to us.

Most scientists agree that cleaning up the Pacific Garbage Patch is unrealistic, but there are things we can do to prevent our waste on land from ending up in the ocean. There's a reason that "recycle" is the last word in "reduce, reuse, recycle." Most plastics can only be recycled one time because they downgrade in quality very quickly, and many things we recycle actually end up in a landfill because of food contamination or mistakes in sorting. Of all of the 50 million plastic bottles that Americans use each year, only 23 percent are recycled. Simple steps to reduce plastic waste are to bring your own produce bags to the grocery store, invest in a reusable water bottle, and buy products in bulk.

Hopefully, the new ban on foreign waste will force the United States to take a critical look at the waste we produce and where it goes. We no longer can simply send it out over the Pacific and wipe our hands clean of it. Instead of starting to send our waste to less developed and less regulated markets such as Vietnam, India, or other parts of Southeast Asia, the United States should focus on plastic bag and bottle bans, invest in our own recycling infrastructure and promote low waste lifestyles. Because of our dependence on offshore recycling, recycling plants and mills haven't developed in the U.S., and it will probably be several years before we can build new infrastructure while piles of paper and plastic wait in lots. This geopolitical crisis may be disastrous right now, but it is an opportunity to take responsibility for our wasteful consumer habits and make positive changes towards safer oceans, waterways, and lands.

FOREVER

words **IRIS KITTLESON**
art **ANNA MARIE BALDWIN**

Uh if I don't fall in love right this second I'm going to have an existential crisis

I've narrowed how the universe works down to a few options. One: there is some sort of afterlife, be it heaven or hell or somewhere in between, that everyone goes to. Your departed family and friends are all there, and so is Elvis. Two: a different kind of higher power will reincarnate us and we'll come back to the earth as different living beings, only vaguely remembering the life or lives that were before us. Three: when we die, nothing happens and we're all just going to decay and decay until there's nothing left of our bodies. There could be more categories, but those seem like the big three. Unfortunately, none of those options are really good enough for me, because none of them explain the scariest thought of them all, the cause of my most relentless existential woes: the vast infinity of time and space. It can't possibly end, because how could it end? I don't think time can end. Because even if it ended, what would come after that? If there's nothing, there's still something. If you're a physicist and you have an explanation, I don't want to hear it. And if your brain doesn't immediately register this information, go get high and think about it some more. Time and space just can't end.

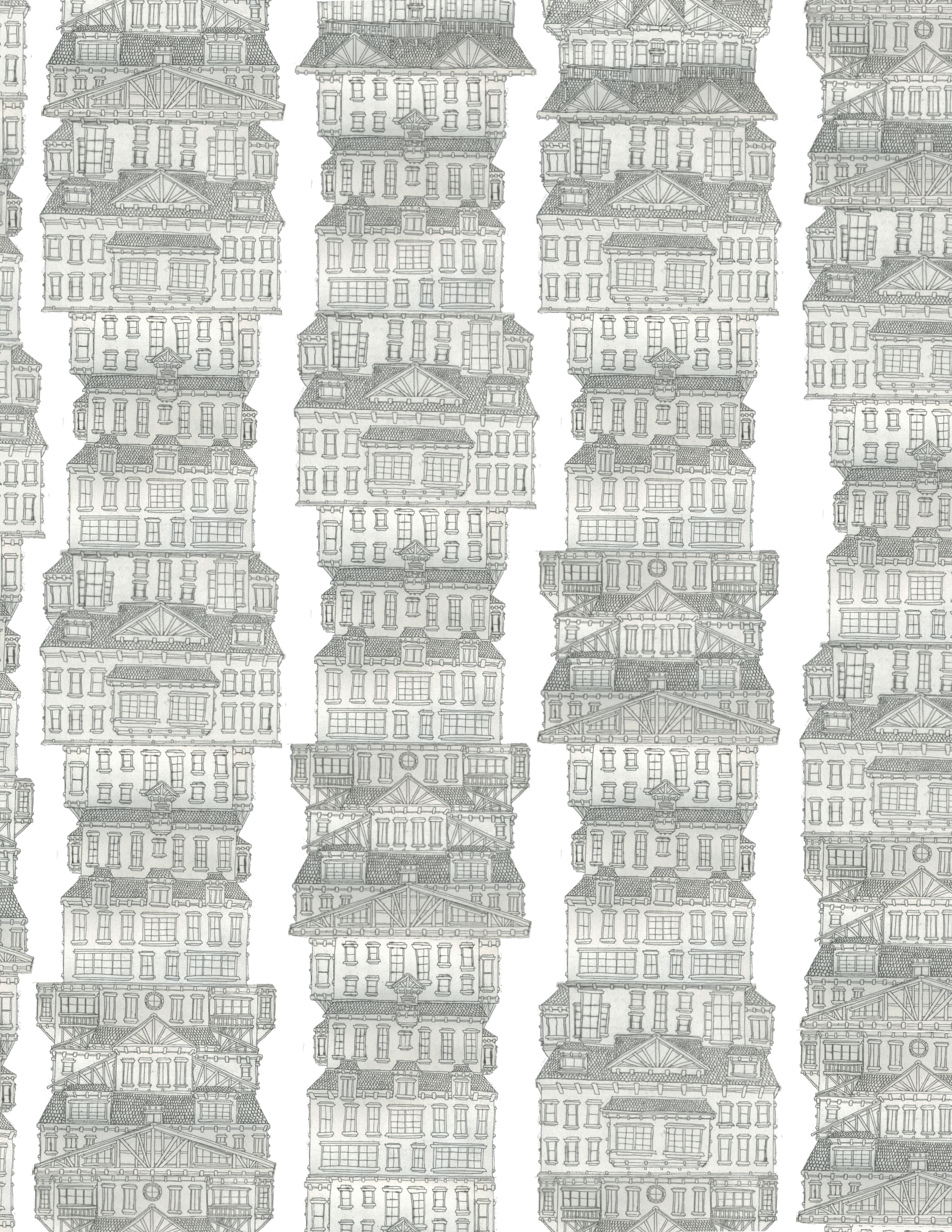
The Land O' Lakes butter logo utilizes the Droste Effect. Named for a Dutch brand of cocoa whose early logo notably employed this effect, this is when a picture appears in another picture over and over again. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has a play within a play, breaking a seal for what could be turned into a play within a play within a play within a play. These everyday examples of what infinity could look like guided my early futile attempt to grasp the concept of endlessness.

"When will the butter lady stop holding the butter?" I asked my mother, which, along with my early affinity for Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, probably led her to assume I'd start tripping on mushrooms pretty young. She answered something that was unsatisfying—"I don't know"—and I kept my mouth shut for a while. Only a five-year-old can ask questions like this without being mocked as an archetypical stoner. But I've never been able to answer it. Because I just can't imagine an answer that would make any sense, because, once again, think about it. What the fuck, right?

When I had my first really bad existential depressive episode, I was given a prescription for Prozac that I've held onto ever since. It allowed me to stop frantically Googling "How To Get Over an Existential Crisis," reading every unhelpful article that I could get my hands on. It calmed the infinity question a little bit, and it allowed me to focus on more mundane things, like sex and homework and interactions with other humans. Before mind-numbing SSRIs, my outlook was pretty dire. Now, it's only in those relatively rare moments of existential crisis-relapse when I fall into an infinite thought spiral. Because, like, who cares about sex when the universe is ever-expanding and what does expanding even mean because where is it expanding to and is there just some wall at the end? What's after that wall? And what about when we die? Because I think going to heaven would be cool for a while, but forever? Like, forever? Taylor, calm down. Wait, think about it—forever. I'm freaking out. I'm totally freaking out. Oh my god, what's the fucking point?

Ugh, can't think about this right now. Prozac-induced mind blank. What? I should masturbate.

words **TAYLOR GRIGGS**
art **ALLISON BARR AND ANNA MAESTAS**



Reflections on INFINITE JEST

I'm finished. I don't do afterwords, so the final pages[1] glide from right to left deep in my fingers and then the book closes. I've sunken deep into my couch since I first started reading *Infinite Jest* three years ago, a usually comforting position that right now feels like a lukewarm hot tub. I feel the need to stand up more than I feel the need to reshelve it, but I might as well do both. This little piece of David Foster Wallace is going back home.

I would measure the distance it took to finish it with the same scale I use with every book I love—from start to finish, reading infinite *Infinite Jest* took me about one nautical mile[2], three years, and two pairs of sambas. I'd heard about it for a long time before I tried it, and I was always under the impression it was one of those Very Important Reads that earned its cultural currency after a VLT[3] (apologies for excessive use of TLA[4]) of general disregard, i.e. the master works of Proust and Tiny Tim… other dead and famous artists[5].

Just to make sure we're all up to speed, *Infinite Jest* is a thousand-page encyclopedic novel that takes seemingly unrelated threads of stuff and carves a narrative path of intersections; tennis, Quebecois independence, boarding schools, psychiatric institutions, being kind of addicted to weed, etc. A lot of *Infinite Jest*'s staying power, with such unorthodox form and content, comes from very effective marketing[6]. Jest might be Wallace's magnum opus, but if this sounds kind of like a fifth grade play from hell that's because it is. DFW has a child devil perched on one shoulder, but also has a grad student angel on his other shoulder who manically organizes these tangents. The book gradually excavates this structure of internal conflict, where one part of David Foster Wallace is snake-taming, bullfighting, and sometimes letting another part of himself run with scissors.

I wish I had some kind of a quip, or a story with any substance or interesting information at all about why I started reading *Infinite Jest*[7], but to tell you the truth I just don't remember. I can say for sure that I rallied to finish it with determination after happening upon the OV archive from the nineties. Among many relics of a bygone era, the '96 David Foster Wallace interview from just after he had finished writing *Infinite Jest* really stuck with me.

The charm of this interview isn't just his age, although that must be part of the allure. At twenty-five, this book tour catches a young writer at the height of young fame. After turning a dissertation[8] into his first novel, he was discovered by a major publishing company that put all their chips on these character quirks and neuroses turning into a bestseller. Length, unusual format, strange plot; the factors that usually render a book unpublishable were precisely what the publishers were advertising.

Before Wallace even put pen to paper with the project that would become Infinite J, Scholastic gave him a million dollar advance on the first two hundred and fifty pages. As far as prospects for encyclopedic novel writers go, this is about as fame-and-fortunate as it gets.

For all this, he was never really given the same treatment as other successful young artists working with different mediums. *Infinite Jest* is extremely famous, but not ubiquitous: almost everybody has heard of that really long book with the footnotes, but almost nobody really feels the desire to read it. This tension between being at once recognized and unknown is kind of the DFW Effect[9] in a nutshell. Wallace was somehow both the coolest writer and the lamest one, his infamous Nixonian sweaty demeanor that didn't accompany an ounce of Nixon's accompanying intimidation, his fingerless gloves with the loose threads on every finger, his black bandana that I hope to God he washed regularly for how much he wore it in public. Maybe that's all actually just pretty lame.

Standing in my living room, feeling listless and not-quite sad[10], I realize that I don't think I've ever taken a longer time to read a book. I reach for the OV archive and open the interview with Wallace again. He chats excitedly with the interviewer about the benefits of taking psychedelic mushrooms, Apollonian character dichotomies, and Michael Jordan being like a God. The faces on the page are young, but the pages in my hand have been oxidized to a rich yellow. Wallace died when he was forty-seven, which feels old to me in this 2018 moment, but I also recognize is quite young.

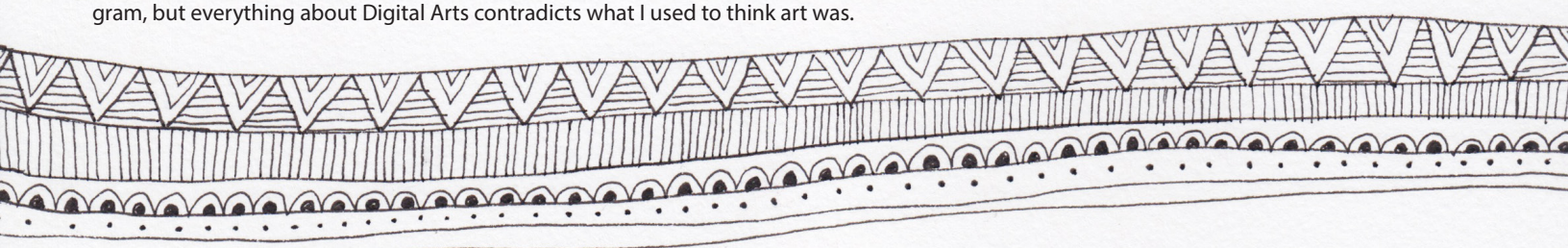
Staying true to Foster with ending at the beginning—forewords usually suck, but the Dave Eggers foreword for *Infinite Jest* does it justice. Eggers makes some remark about how people will own the book for a long time without reading it, that they have to wait for a moment when *Infinite Jest* meets them halfway. The David Foster Wallace interview ends as tragicomically as you would expect:

(paraphrase)
OV: Do you think people will still be reading *Infinite Jest* in twenty years?
W: Since you're the only person in Eugene who finished it and it came out this year, I hope nobody is subjected to it twenty years from now.

My moment came twenty years after this interview, and many more moments will come. READ INFINITE JEST!

words **MILES SHEPARD**

I don't think I knew what I was getting into when I applied to the Digital Arts program. Not because it's wrong for my career path, but because it has affected my lifelong passion for art and my interest in it outside of academics. Most people experience depression sometime in their life, right? Art in general used to be a healing, healthy outlet for my pain, but in recent years it's been the last thing I've wanted to do. The correlation between my progression in my major and my decline in creative activity on my own is undeniable. This isn't to say that I don't belong in my program, but everything about Digital Arts contradicts what I used to think art was.



While brainstorming art ideas for this issue (it's worth noting that this is my first contribution to Oregon Voice), I came across a familiar artist, Yayoi Kusama, who repeatedly explores the concept of infinity in her work. Thanks to YouTube, I was able to further immerse myself in her overwhelming work by watching a short documentary about her, appropriately called "The Inexhaustible Creations of Yayoi Kusama." In it, she meticulously paints shapes and patterns over and over and over. The top section of my piece is inspired by that process. It's also important to note that Kusama has anxiety disorders, like myself and countless other artists, so the action of doing the same thing over and over is meditative. This is why Kusama is an artist, and it's why I thought I was for most of my life. I didn't get into art because I was confident in my abilities, I did it because it was distracting, calming, and something I enjoyed.

This piece is, in a way, a deconstruction of the artistic process because while the middle section is supposed to represent how exhaustive and daunting it can be, the bottom section is a simple pattern study inspired by my artistic transition from analog to digital techniques, and the blank section represents how difficult it was for me to put pen to paper when it had become so unfamiliar to me. As I was drawing these simple patterns, all I could think about was how easy it would be for me to complete this piece by using Photoshop to duplicate everything I was drawing by hand, and how if I had scanned the drawing into Photoshop, I could've used the paint bucket tool to fill the background of the top section with purple, instead of pulling out my acrylic paints I hadn't touched in almost two years after convincing myself it would be faster than using colored pencils. I came to the conclusion that learning and using Adobe programs has tricked my mind into believing that drawing, painting, or doing any kind of art by hand is not worth my time anymore.

words & art
HANNAH SMULAND

STAIR MASTER

words **PATRICK RILEY**

SEARCH RESULTS:

Stair-Climbers: Use Them Right! - *Women's Health*
How to Use a Stair Climber - dummies
How to Use a Stair Climber Machine - *LA Fitness*

I lower my screen's brightness and tap the link for dummies. Leaning back on the bench against the wall, I shield my phone from the view of the toned and glistening bodies passing by. I study the machines across the room and mentally rehearse each action listed in the article: body upright, hands on the bars, full, even steps, confident stride.

Runners, climbers, lifters, trainers, pushers, and pullers surround me. I stub my toe as I mount the thing. When I look down to turn it on, a piece of paper shouts, "OUT OF ORDER". I consider going home, but I think of my lifeless apartment and the membership I just bought. I step onto the next machine over. Out of curiosity, I tap the "Landmarks" button on the touchscreen. A list appears: Taj Mahal, Statue of Liberty, Big Ben, Page 2. Each is a workout with a set amount of steps corresponding to the real thing, complete with a diagram of a skyscraper for your icon to ascend.

I'm halfway up the Eiffel Tower, sweating through my shirt when I see a small, muscular man approach the broken machine.

"That one's out of order," I say casually.

"I know."

I choke on the word "Yeah."

He steps up onto the stairs, rips the paper from its place, and crumples it. I notice his nametag. Tick-Tock Body Works 24/7: RONNIE. He pulls out a screwdriver and opens up the control panel. I go back to looking down at my feet and straining to breathe. The stair machine on my other side is occupied by a young woman in a colorful all-Nike outfit. She's doing a sort of side stepping exercise that makes my march feel plain and primitive. Her machine is set to a faster pace than mine, and her entire body is facing me. I keep waiting for her to switch sides and turn away, but she doesn't.

I try increasing my speed and begin to sink to the low end of the stairs. When I press the down arrow a few times, there's a loud beep letting everyone know I'm back down to the lowest setting. I turn to watch Ronnie dissect the panel. There's an impressive thicket of computer parts inside. I stare at the wires and circuit boards that hold the world's most famous buildings.

"How do you know how to do all that?" I ask.

"These things are always acting up. I've been here a while."

"Yeah, me too," I say.

Ronnie pauses and looks up at me. "Huh. I've never seen you here."

"Well, I'm Jared."

Ronnie nods.

"What's wrong with it?" I ask.

"Resistance stopped working."

"Bummer."

My icon approaches the top of the tower. Two floors to go, then one, then I'm there. The steps slow to a halt. I try to imagine the Parisian sprawl beneath me while I catch my breath. I'm pretty sure there's a river. I see a sweat rag on the floor.

Ronnie opens up the body of the stair climber. A chain connects the jagged stair panels in an endless loop. It's greasy. He twists his screwdriver and adjusts the chain. The mirrors on each wall of the room create the illusion of distance, and I gaze at the tunnelling reflections of my damp, weak body.

Ronnie closes up the encasement.

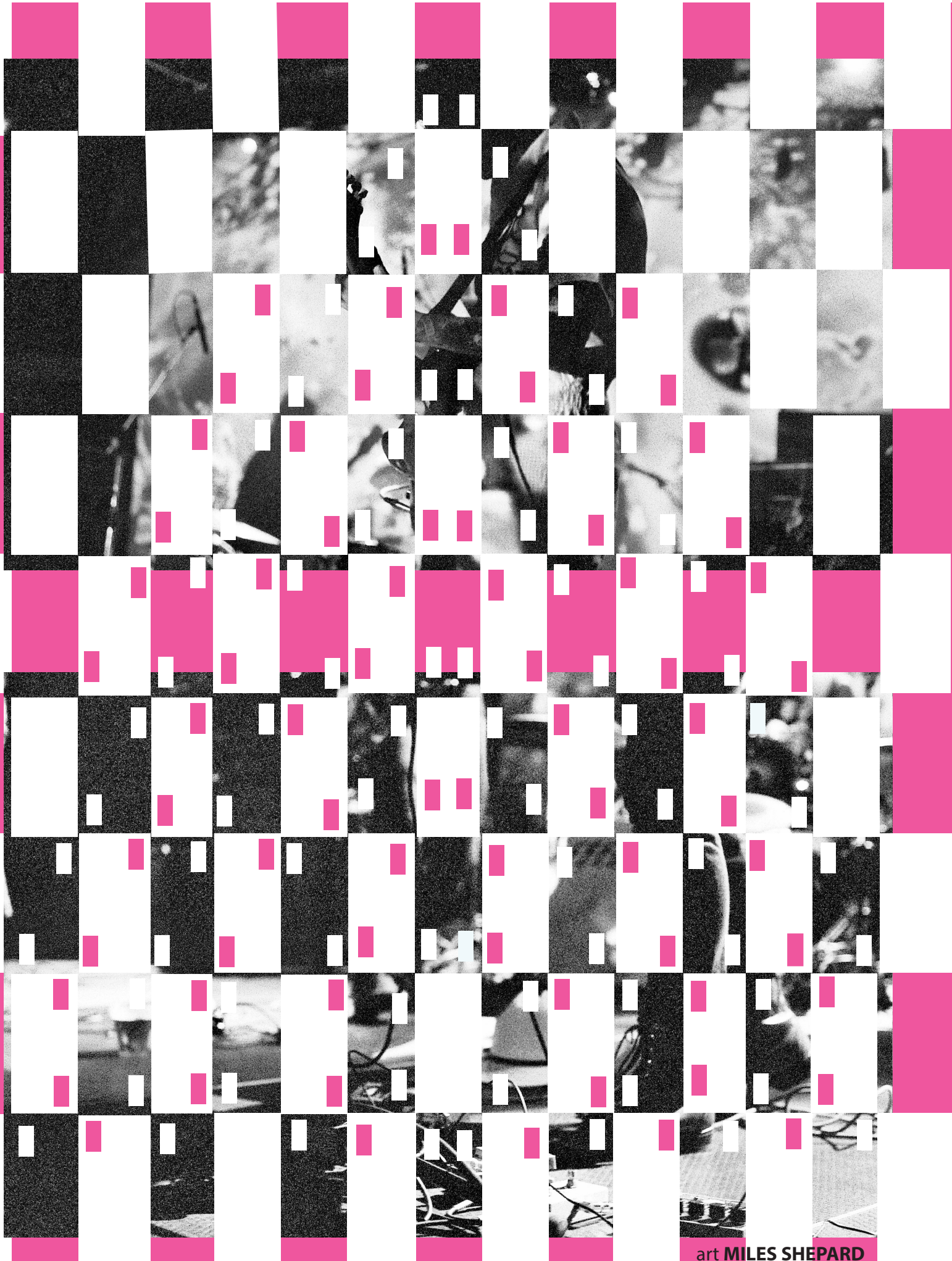
"You get it fixed?" I ask.

"Yup."

"Nice. Hey, have you ever been to Paris?"

"Nope."

I wait for him to ask why I brought it up. Instead, he turns and walks away, tapping the screwdriver on his palm. I look to the woman next to me, and she finally turns her back. The other machines look even more complex and dangerous than this one. I lean on the control panel and study my statistics. Suddenly, it kicks back into motion, and before I know it, I'm scaling the Taj Mahal.



art **MILES SHEPARD**

Ode to Goth Girls

O' goth girls, y'all are so scary
and I like that.
With your black nail polish
and your monochrome wardrobes,
O' goth girls,
Won't you place a hex upon my life?

O' goth girls, why are y'all so bad at gardening?
I knew a goth girl named Cynthia
Who planted yams all up in her flower bed
But it was winter in Seattle and that shit never grew.
O' goth girls, your touch of death is frightening
And I like that.

O' goth girls, sorry for generalizing
And commodifying your whole aesthetic,
It's just that I'm down with that spooky shit.
Y'all probably hate the capitalist machine,
And I like that.
O' goth girls, won't you overthrow the government?

words **ROSS KARAPONDO**

Love Bytes

I light the screen for blue mood flicker
Bite lip and show you my targeted ads
We tongue kiss and install a sex drive
Two tangled cords drag digital nicotine down throats
Ecstatic vapor curls and clings to the sweat stench
I hack your cock to an erroneous beat
Me and my software thrill in bionic orgasm

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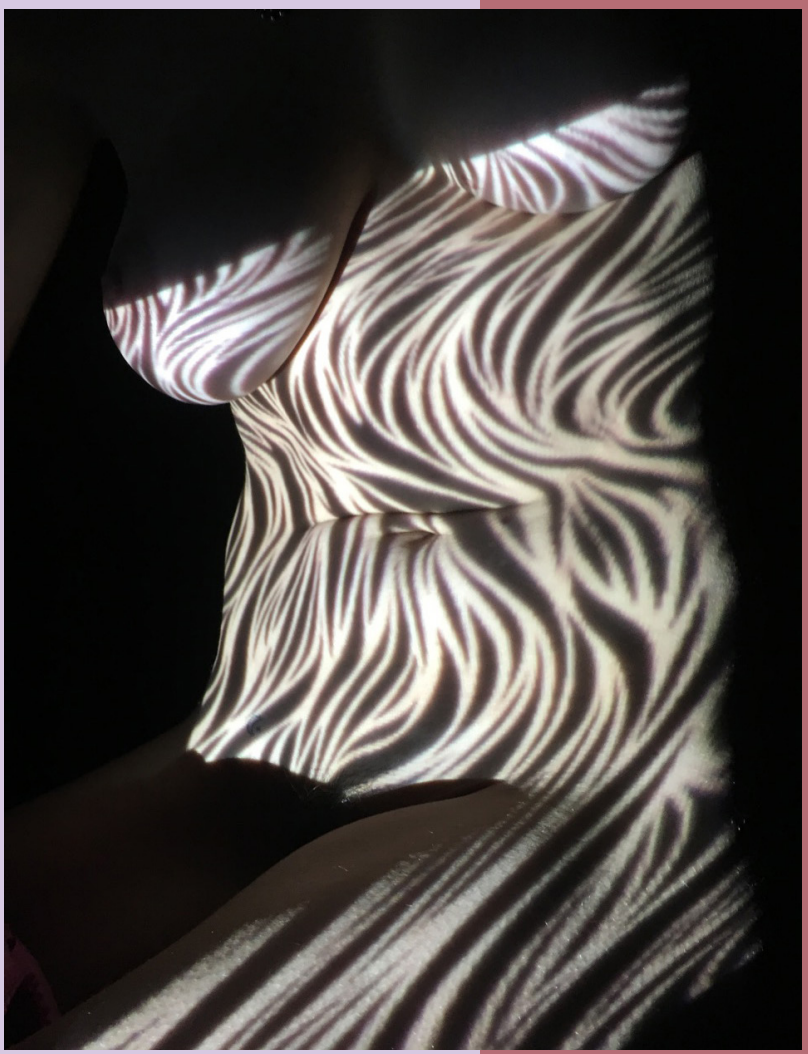
words **ANNALEE NOCK**



An Ambivalent Uncertainty

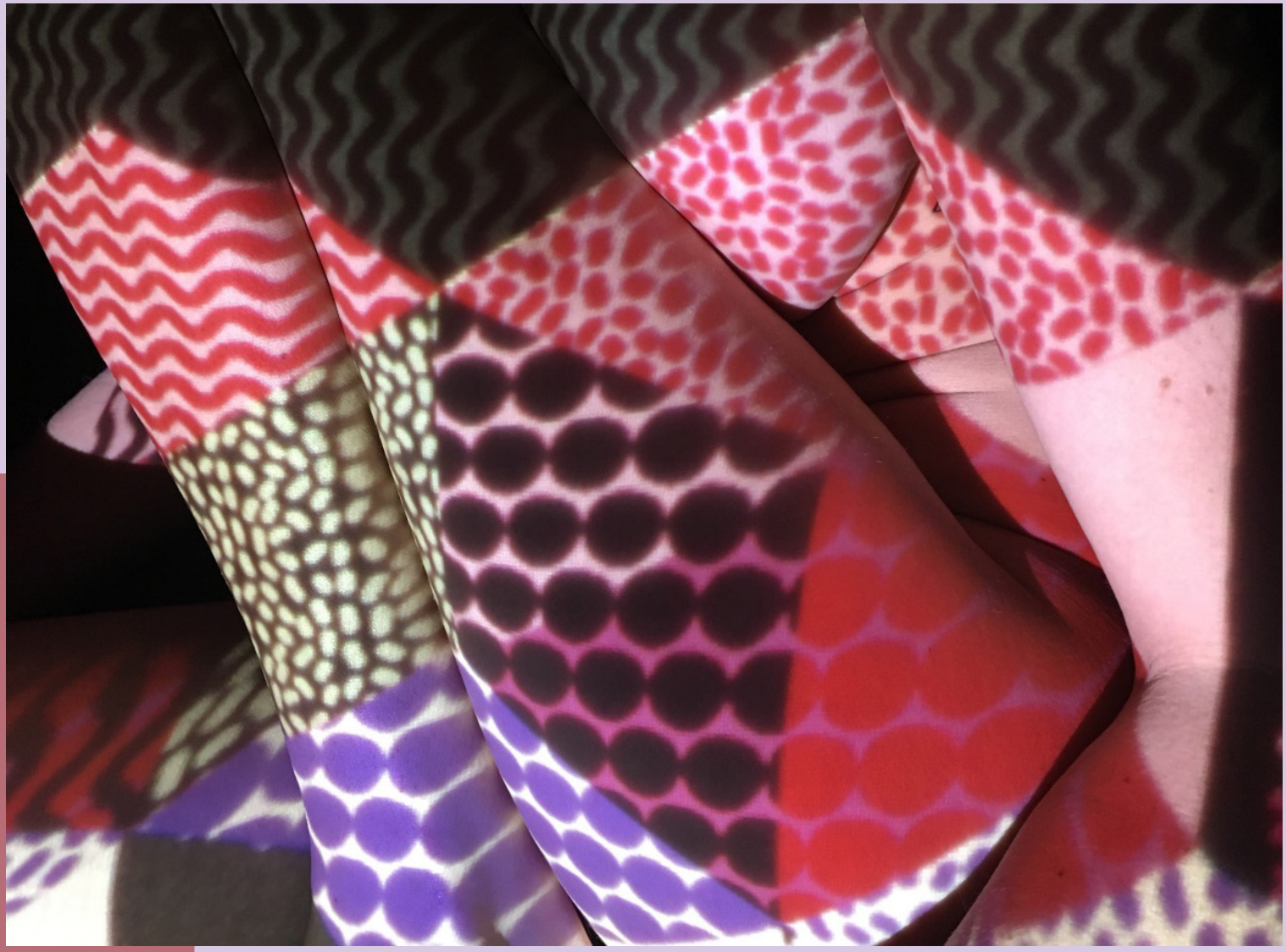
I don't know why life shifts from astonishing to unbearable,
why gardens of dahlia's turn to daggers,
and what was once ultraviolet disintegrates
into shredded petals on the floor.

I don't know why distant cheers
echo into the isolation of bedroom walls,
while aching prayers are carried away with the wind
and disconsolate tears trickle down a drain to nowhere.

I don't know why euphoria is fleeting,
why moments that glitter dim without warning,
but darkness creeps in as reliably as a wave's break
and turns the hands on the clock to stone.

I know bliss. I know anguish.
But, why do I totter between them
like a rowboat against the current?
Why the joy? Why the pain?
I don't know what scares me more -
what I know or what I don't.

words **SAMANTHA SEATON**



I moved to Virginia and met my wife, Karen
She worked at the Petersburg Apple store
She sold me a computer that I used
to gamble on the internet
I won a lot of money
I bought a hot new car
We got engaged
then I lost my money
gambling on the internet
I could've kept it but
the whole thing was rigged
I hate that website but I love my wife, Karen

We sold the car and we had a daughter

If I never went to Virginia
If I moved to Nebraska
or Texas I wonder
Would I still have my hot new car

There was a typo
a grammatical error
on the Wikipedia page
for the multiverse
I saw it and I changed it
I fixed the mistake
for all of the people
in this universe

words **PATRICK RILEY**

art **KATE GORHAM**

Circles

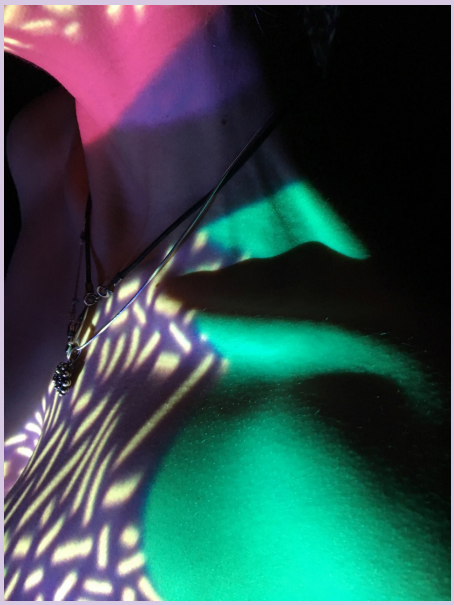
I will live inside my body as bone moved by brain
until my body deteriorates and my life passes into zenith

I will die inside my body the coffin I was bone into
I will be released from earthly limitations and grasp into endless dream

Mortal form will decompose and meld into soil
enriching the earth with particles of life

My mind will become one as I have been forgotten
We will rise as light without form

As cycler a process as the earth's revolution around the sun



flowers

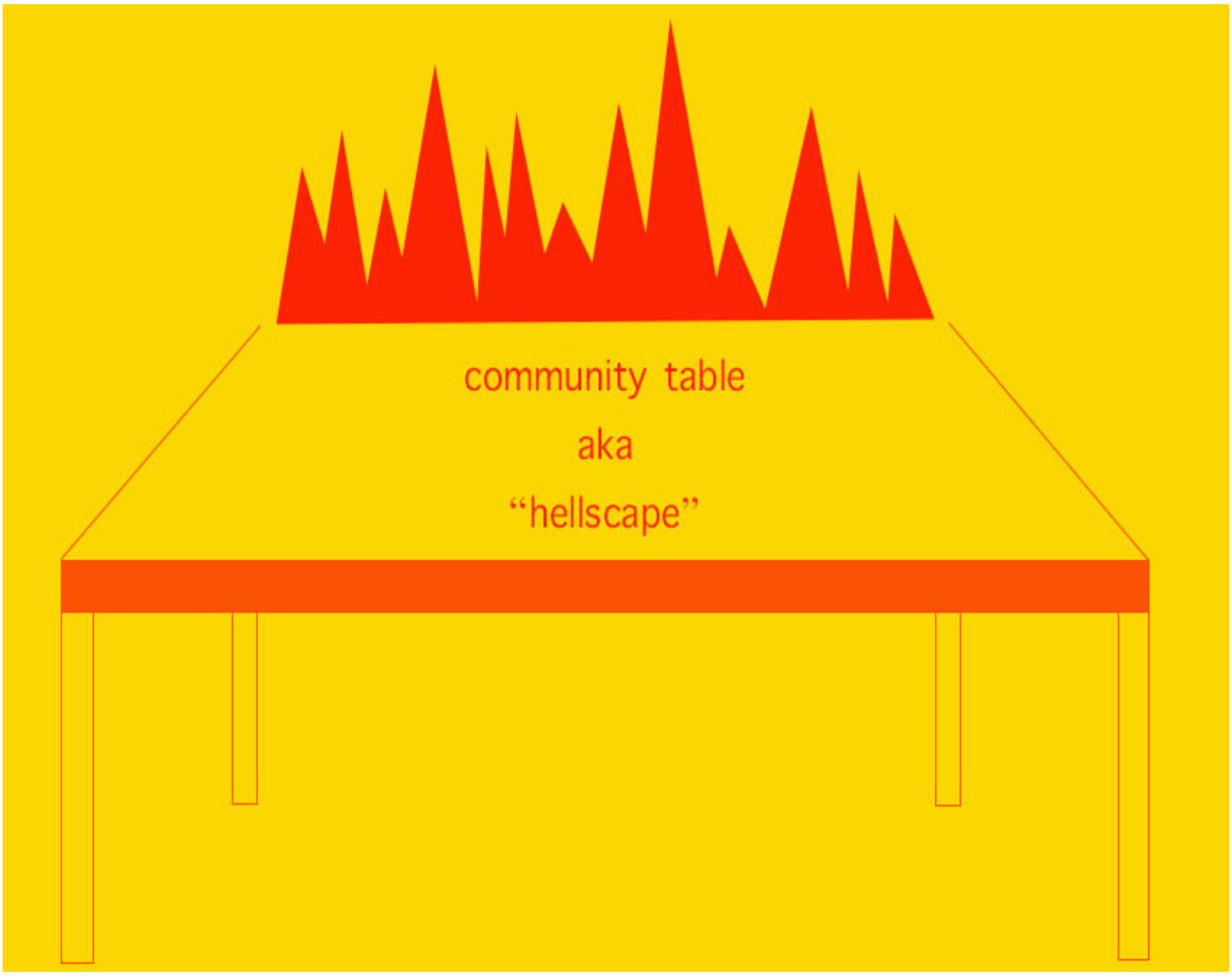
what are flowers
besides what we make them to be
such delicate things
so little and pristine
we pluck them from life
and they cant even scream

but what are flowers
are they simply composed
of chloroplast
to make them grow green
and petals bright
to attract buzzing bees

no
flowers are more
they are the scent of escape
lingering in the air
a breath of freedom
blooming before dawn
flowers are life
in beauteous forms
growing from the earth
and into to the earth
they will wilt
like a dream

words **SERENA J MORGAN**

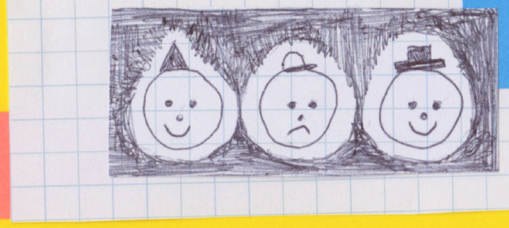
art **KATE GORHAM**



The day feels i n f i n i t e in a way I wish it didn’t. Between sighs I’ve lived weeks and every step I’ve trudged a mile. My heartbeat maintains a flutter, hovering in my chest like a hummingbird oh I know this can’t be good for my health at all, I had a better metaphor that I forgot, I’m sorry. Dear stranger, don’t sit closer. In fact, sit so much over-there that I can fake being alone. We’re friends from afar for a reason. Just this once, please look past me like I don’t know your mom’s name. The community table in a coffee shop is a cesspool of ceaseless distrust and discomfort and every time I dart my eyes over my shoulder there’s a different face glaring at 1) my computer screen 2) my fore-head 3) the crumb in my crotch. Leave me and my crumb here at this slab of oak/cherry/walnut/beech to rot in this eternal hellscape until the slow rumble of their sweet-nothings is enough for me to shuffle my shit away back into my backpack so I can scream internally somewhere else.

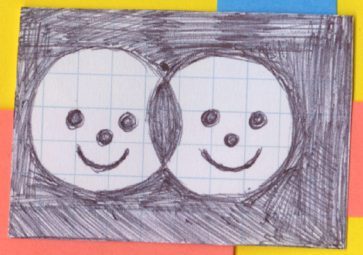
words and art **KAYA NOTEBOOM**

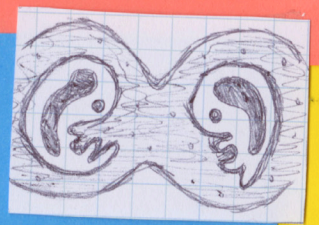
INFATUATION

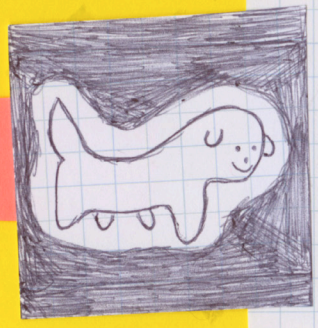


OH GOD! I'VE NEVER SEEN A FACE UNTIL I SAW THEIR'S! (BUT WHAT OF THE FACE FROM LAST WEEK?) OH GOD! I'VE NEVER FELT SO CLOSE, SO CONNECTED, SO IN TUNE!

OH, I WISH TO KISS YOU FOREVER, MY PERVERSE TWIN! LET'S GET A DOG!







art **KAYA NOTEBOOM**

Interview with Rodney Marsalis

Rodney Marsalis, acclaimed trumpet player and leader of The Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass, was on campus April 16-18. He spoke with University of Oregon students, faculty, and the public about his career as a musician of color and the challenges he and others have faced within the music industry.

In his talks, Mr. Marsalis recounted the gruesome physical attack he endured by undercover Barcelona cops in 2002 as he was attempting to drop off his rent-a-car in an enclosed parking garage. He was asked for I.D. by security guards outside a venue where he was about to play while his white counterparts in the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra received no such distinction. This assumption of not belonging was a common narrative throughout his speeches. To Marsalis, the term "separate but equal" is very much alive and well within American society. While the steps we as a nation have taken toward equality are great, he says that without integration, there can be no true equality. He questioned the benefits of traditional outreach programs prevalent within classical music institutions and instead argued for greater opportunities and resources to be offered in underrepresented communities. Paramount to his message was the notion that building a better future for our world starts with providing education and opportunities to young people. When I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Marsalis in person he made sure to clarify his reality from his message. "I hope when I was talking it didn't get too dark because I feel more hopeful than anything," said Marsalis. "When you see the energy from young people, that's what gives me hope. They see the world completely different than even my generation. Those sorts of things we grew up with as norms, these distinctions, things that keep us separated, it make no sense to them. What they see is what should be normal and it is refreshing to be around them."

What follows is a Q and A with Marsalis that has been lightly edited for clarity.

In your speeches you mentioned the soul quite a bit. That "souls don't have color" and that "the arts are an indication of the soul of a society." How do you define the soul?

I think there's something that we're are all a part of. The reason I think people recognize beauty is because you are recognizing something that you feel within yourself, that's inside all of us. And in music or in art, when you see it, you recognize it. It's not just in people, it's in everything. Kinda like the Force from Star Wars. (laughs) I'm a geek.

You also question the benefits of traditional outreach programs in underrepresented communities in this country. What has been your experience with this method?

When I came back to the states after being in Europe I saw some of the programs that were in place, where groups would go into underrepresented parts of town and play music and you know, do outreach. But when you are from that community, you don't feel like you belong. It's like someone coming into your neighborhood with no one in that group who looks like you, [they] do their thing and then go back to wherever it is they came from. People see through that and especially young people really see through it.

If a musician has a large following and therefore a platform, do you think they have an obligation to use that platform to some degree politically?

I think what happens is, with the arts in general, when you've done it for a while, you almost end up falling into using your platform in that way. Take for example Nina Simone—I don't think starting out that was her intention, but something about the truth that exists in music, which you then don't see existing in the real world, you can't help but say something. I think it happens organically when you really are involved in the arts. As artists we are expressing how we see the world around us and I can't see how you can be an artist and not express what you see
around you.

What do you want your legacy to be, as a human being and as a musician?

I would like for people to look back and think that what we (Philadelphia Big Brass) are doing was just normal. That we were just ahead of our time. And that were were just trying to create
art and that we had pushed aside all these notions of race and gender and all these differences.

words and photography **SHAE WIRTH**

Earthquake Weather

My father was born in 1964. He emerged in the upstairs bedroom of the vast and creaky farmhouse, incense filling the air and crystals hanging across the window throwing rainbows across the people inside. It was early August, the day when North Vietnam fired on a US Destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin, the Beatles' "A Hard Day's Night" was number one in the charts and there were race riots in Jersey City. But my father was cloistered in the hills, Tibetan prayer flags fluttering in the wind, flowers hanging upside down in the store room drying ready to be made into wreaths.

Auspiciously, my grandmother Celia was born 20 years earlier, two days before the trains began to run into Auschwitz. Later, she would think it fitting that both she and her son were born on the eve of wars. Their station wagon only worked half the time, so her feet were black from walking into town and her shoulders were dappled with freckles and sun spots. She was married under the trees, beneath an arch of branches draped with flowers. No one from her blood family were there, except my father, who twisted in her abdomen, her white sundress stretched taut across her belly. The high priestess of Camp Bliss led the ceremony, her breasts swinging like pendulums underneath her tunic, her brown arms wrapped with silver snakes. They had an ancient Celtic hand-binding ceremony, where Celia asked Alfred as they clasped hands: "Will you hurt me someday?" to which he replied,

"I may."

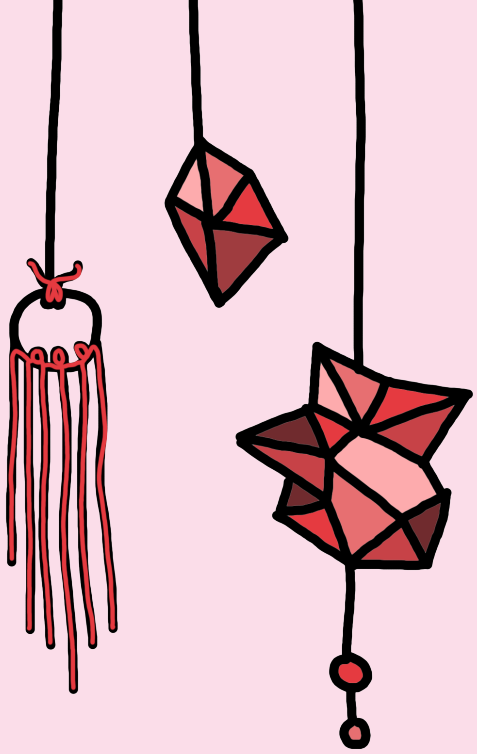
Celia's family was the commune, and after the ceremony they reached out and held the couple in their arms, swaying. I doubt my grandmother ever went to city hall to sign the papers, which is a blessing.

They lived communally at Camp Bliss. Marxist literature lined the shelves in the great room. They were vegetarian and anti-fascist, addled with drugs but purists, living off the land and making things for farmers markets. Celia was filled with paranoia. She was a runaway from the Midwest, of hearty Polish blood, raised on cheese, beer and lakewater. She grew up ducking and covering under her desks and mistrusting foreigners. She had night terrors, waking in a sweat during her pregnancy. Her heart beat too loud for her to sleep peacefully. No one had ever warned her of that.

My father inherited her fear. His world was small; it started at the road and the main house, and ended at the bottom of the slope at the manure piles behind the goats, where the trees rose up like an impenetrable wall. My grandfather Alfred was the beekeeper and liked when they stung him. He shot geese over the marshes and skinned the rabbits. When he was happy, he was loving and boisterous. He had grown up only a few miles away, over the ridge, and won "Most Liked" as his senior superlative. Celia felt safe in his arms and knew he would provide for her. But when he was angry, a dark cloud fell over Camp Bliss. He looked into the night sky for UFOs, trained his rifle on the strange people he said wandered the perimeters of the farm, and listened over the radio for hidden messages in the static.

It had all started when Jordan Grey died. His car had careened off of the winding mountain road into a creek, and my grandfather was devastated. They had been inseparable for fifteen years, practically brothers, and the loss knocked whatever screw was loose in my grandfather's brain and made it rattle much more. He built a shrine to Jordan in the bedroom, left the candles burning all day and night, flickering over my father as he slept and the cut-out photos of Jordan resting on the table. My father spilled the wax onto his arms as he played and has shown me the splotchy scars that still dapple his wrists. My grandmother thought she understood. She understood grief; she had lost her entire family when she hitchhiked out west and married a hippie. She appeased my grandfather as he built a survival bunker outside, bandaged his blistered palms, and agreed not to drive down the mountain anymore. She stopped selling her salves and jams at the farmer's market and took up macra-me, weaving elaborate wall hangings that collected dust in the farmhouse.

My father smashed the persimmons rotting on the floor of the orchard with his rain boots. He was bored, and as he got older the confines of the farm seemed to creep up on him and suffocate him. He was standoffish and quiet, and the other children's loud games and screeches upset and disturbed his sol-itude. He took to wandering in the woods, making fairy houses out of twigs and moss, leaving crumbs for them and waiting to see if they could be caught. The sun had fallen behind the ridge and a cold shadow fell across the valley as my father wandered along the path into the fold of the trees. The stream was a few hundred yards into the redwoods, and it only trickled during summer when the children splashed in the chilly water, but that day it was rushing swiftly with last week's rain. He squatted on the beach and poked at the rotting shell of a crawdad. A streak of red snaked in the water towards his hands, diffusing as it reached him. He glanced upstream, towards an overhang of ferns and a mess of branches, where the salmon swam in the dark water and you could stand with your tip toes on the flat rock that rested on the bottom of the pool. The pale hair of a girl swirled in the current and entangled in the foliage, her white hands up-turned on the surface. My father knew she was dead before he even screamed, her naked breasts were slashed with red. He waded over, noticed a leech on her soft, pale stomach, and pinched it between his fingers until blood ran down his small wrist.



The boots of the police trailed the river silt into the house and left damp leaves and muddy prints criss-crossed across the wood floors. Yellow tape was strung up between the trees and across the creek, until weeks later when it fell and shredded onto the ground, covered in the soft fall soil. Celia had to throw out five jars of olallieberry jam because her tears fell into the pot as she stirred. My father curled at her feet on the rug like a cat, a snail closed up and sealed in during a drought, and Celia worried he would never speak again. They all went to the funeral of the neighbor's daughter, but they had to stand outside the church. The trail was cold, and all that was left were strands of blonde hair tied up in the ferns. There was a killer in the hills, and since the police recommended that no one hitch hike, everyone at Camp Bliss was trapped, except for Alfred with his station wagon. The bodies of college students hitchhiking into town were found in roadside ditches. A camp of teenagers were found slaughtered, execution style, in the state park.

"It's blood payment," Alfred said to everyone around the campfire. "Vietnam held it over for a while, but the war's winding down. The boys are coming home. Less blood."

Everyone shifted uncomfortably and glanced at the ground. Alfred was becoming increasingly erratic. He stayed up all night banging on the doors and yelling to people that weren't there. He developed an elaborate spiritual system to test for earthquakes and stood in front of his shrine for Jordan for hours every day. Celia avoided him and floated around the farm quietly and meekly, my father trailing at her ankles and regressing into infancy, crawling on his knees until all of his clothes were ripped and dirty and sucking his thumb as Celia worked in the steamy damp greenhouse.

Alfred held a knife against his wrists and let the blood drip into the soil of the newly potted tomato seedlings. Celia looked away. It was sacrifice, blood payment, to the earth to hold off the big earthquake. Alfred was born on the anniversary of the 1906 Earthquake in San Francisco, when the earth split and the city crumbled down into flames. He was obsessed with it, and every time it was hot and the air crackled with electricity from summer storms, he would put his nose into the air and tell my father,

"Watch out boy, it's earthquake weather. The next big one's coming soon."

He thought the next big quake would come and split California apart like a ripe fruit, right through the Loma Prieta fault line that sidled up against Camp Bliss. My father thought a lot about the continents crunching against each other thousands of feet below his bed, sometimes imagining he could hear the creaking of rock on rock, lava splashing, and screams of the damned in hell if he pressed his ear hard enough against the ground. His breath steamed against the floor when he heard the scream, and he froze in place, his eyes darting across the dark room to the crescent moon framed by the window. The other children popped out of their beds and squealed in terror, and he tripped on his pajama pants as he scrambled to his parents' room.

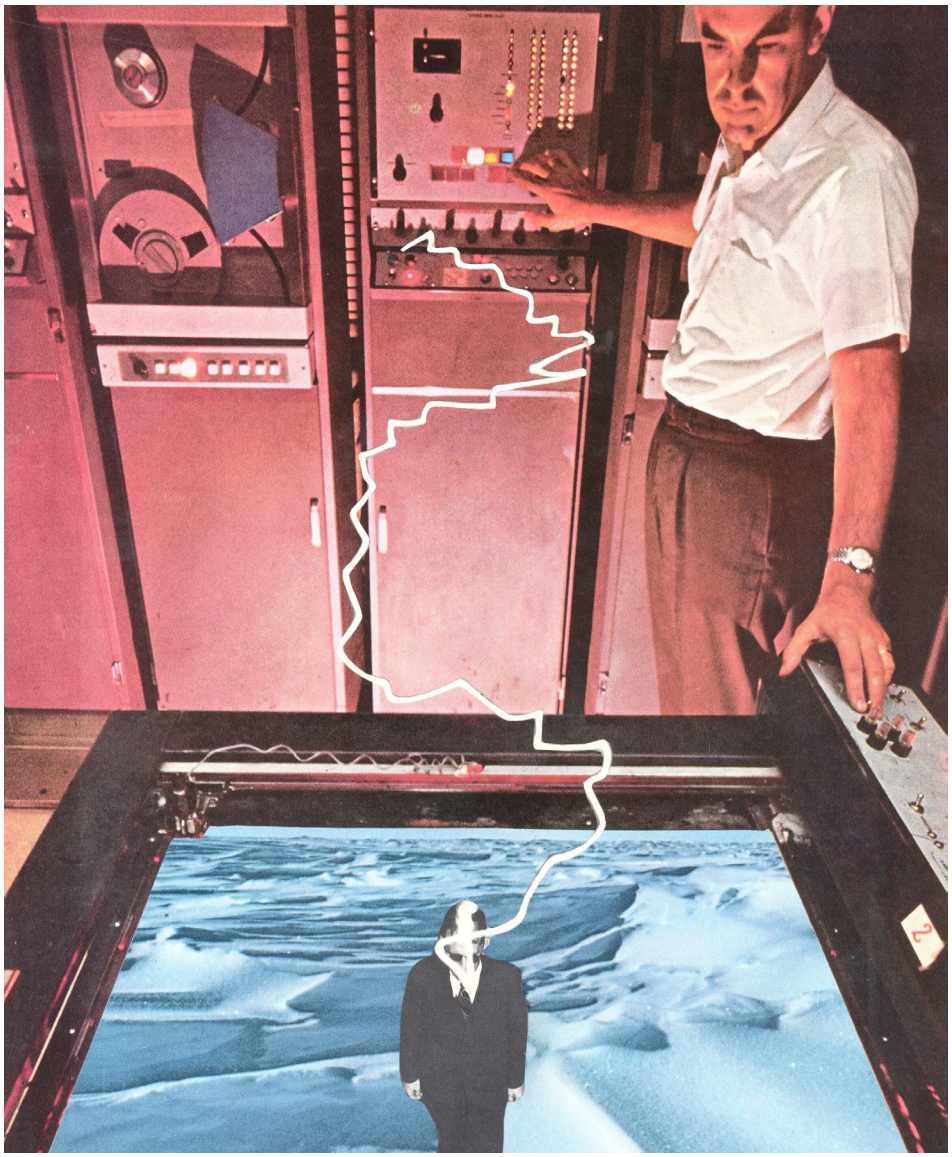
Alfred was sitting cross legged in front of the shrine, the candles distorting and twisting his shadows flung up against the wall. He was humming a spell they sang during midwinter to pray for the Northern Hemisphere to tilt back towards the sun. The sheets of the bed were crumpled and splattered with blood and my father ran towards it, Celia splayed on her stomach, her blonde hair matted with blood on her temple, the blood still pumping out and soaking the cotton in black as she cried out for help. For the second time, my father didn't make a sound. He realized it was the first time he had been on his feet and ran for months. He stood over his mother's head as the other adults ran in, a screaming, swirling, chaotic cluster, as the police and ambulance lights shone red and blue from the road, until Alfred was calmly placed in the back of the car and Celia was trussed up and carted outside. He was a hero, he said, as they chained his hands behind his back, his face pressed against the ground. His blood sacrifice had placated the Loma Prieta. People had to die for the greater good. The soil needed to be fertilized with blood.

It was 1973 when my father's big quake happened, when his world split into two and collapsed in on itself. Celia and my father flew East, into plump Polish arms and bowls of cheese curds and custard. The land was too flat there, and the sky was too big. There was no fear of earthquakes in that part of the country, only snow storms and tornadoes. When he swam in the lake, he feared that white, cold hands would grab up and reach at him, swirling in his hair. My grandfather lay thousands of miles away, in a deep farm valley surrounded by fences. Even when my father moved back West, he never visited. When we drive South down I-5 to visit Celia in Los Angeles, my father and I collectively turn our faces left as we pass the state penitentiary and nod, as if in respect to the serial killer who took thirteen lives to placate the continents that continually fight below our feet.

words **IRIS KITTLESON**
art **ANNA BALDWIN**

Screens

words **SAM PARKER**
art **MIRANDA CAVAGNARO**



You are in a place of tranquility. A place where people go to avoid the rest of the world. A place of zen. A place of meditation. A place of reflection.

But yet, there it is. Glowing with notifications. Buzzing and beating with its own heartbeat as people in far away lands try to connect with you. Tracking your every step and recording what you choose. You share pictures of yourself practicing the art of meditation... But doesn't that defeat the whole point?

An action of solitude and rehabilitation reduced to a simple caption and three hundred and seventy-four likes from people who really just don't give a fuck about your life. You probably spent half the time you were meditating just thinking of the caption.

On the other side of the world, three young adventurers and yourself have just finished a 10 mile hike. A waiter brings out a hot meal that is meant to be shared family style. Mouths water and others begin pulling out their forks and knives.

But wait... You have to take a picture first. It is never enough to just eat the food. You must capture and post so you can feel some sort of validation. As if the ache in your heels and the rumbling in your stomach isn't enough for you. Everyone must know that you are eating and that you went hiking.

You eat and you somewhat participate in the conversation. But the whole time your eyes drift towards the table, towards your screen as personyoubarelyknow47 likes your post.

You are at the gym. A place to develop and fine-tune your body so that you can look better for yourself... Nope. Wait. You post a photo of yourself in your workout attire standing next to some weights. Maybe you picked them up... Maybe you didn't. It doesn't matter. Everyone you know thinks you were at the gym and that's what really counts. You enter the steam room and hot tub before returning to your car.

You are at the beach. Good friends around you, your favorite music blasting through a speaker and, of course, your camera phone in hand. You ask your friend to take a photo of you. She does so willingly because she wants you to take one of her later.

You spend the next twenty minutes editing, captioning and posting your photo. You settle on: *Just a bad beach chillin' in the sand*. As the likes pour in, you realize that it is too windy and that you don't want to be on the beach any longer. Your friends agree and you all drive home while looking at your screens. One hundred year old forests surround you the entire ride home.

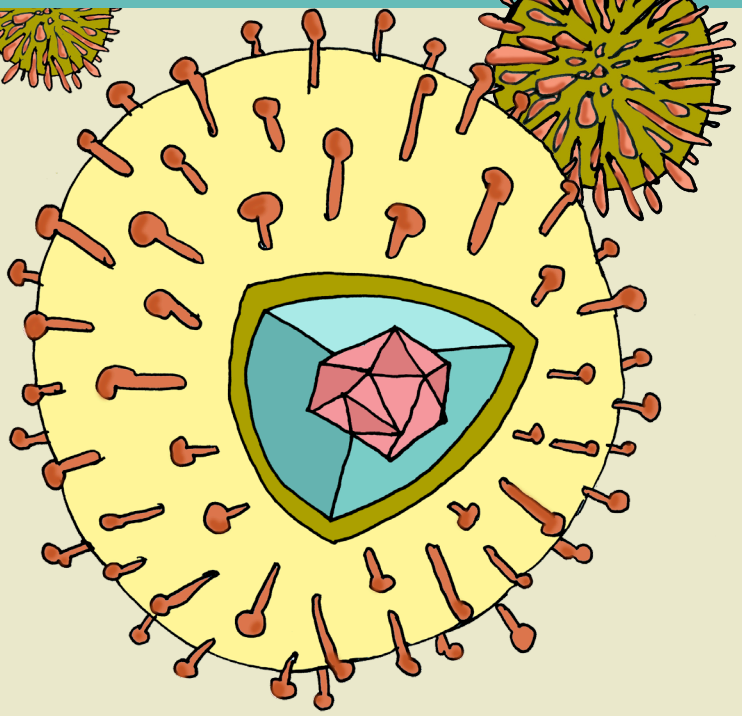
You just liked a meme.

It is your birthday. It is never enough for it to just be your birthday though. Facebook sends a notification to practically everyone you know but still... you need more.

You post an old photo of yourself. One where you are a little skinnier and maybe tanner and write something along the lines of: *19 never felt so good*. You watch the likes pour in. However, this time there are comments too. People commenting *Happy Bday!* and other nonsense.

You do not question if these people care. All you see is that practically four hundred people liked your post. You blow out your candles and wish that you can finally be happy.

To Infinity and Beyond!



There are few things to which every 2 out of 3 adults under the age of 50 can relate. One of them is having herpes! Two-thirds of adults have HSV-1 (Herpes Simplex Virus 1), the virus which causes oral cold sores. One in six have genital herpes (HSV-2). Most importantly, this is OK and does not make you a bad human!

The herpes virus has been around for what seems like since before humankind and in fact, it has been. New studies are revealing that oral herpes has existed since the split of our human ancestors and close cousins, chimpanzees, around 6 million years ago! The HSV-2 virus, virologists believe, jumped into the human bloodline from ancestral chimpanzees, closer to 1.4 million years ago.

The transmission of these viruses surely ensued from exchanging bodily fluids via violence, such as attacks or hunting. Perhaps it was an attack between the primate *Paratroops boisei* and our more recent ancestor *Homo erectus*. Or the Homo erectus scavenged a Paratroops boisei corpse. Nevertheless the infected blood of the chimpanzee made its way into us Homo sapiens. In today's world, transmission generally occurs not on the battlefield but during smooching and shagging.

There's some good news and some bad news. The bad news is 1) Once you contract this virus you have it for the rest of your life; 2) HSV will continue to infect humans for infinity and beyond, unless a cure is devised or every person on this planet is educated on sexual health and implements that knowledge perfectly! Alas, unlike herpes, neither perfection or universal sexual health education is in our bloodline. Which brings me to the good news: there are ways to protect yourself, your partner(s) and stay educated on the matter! Here are some quick tips:

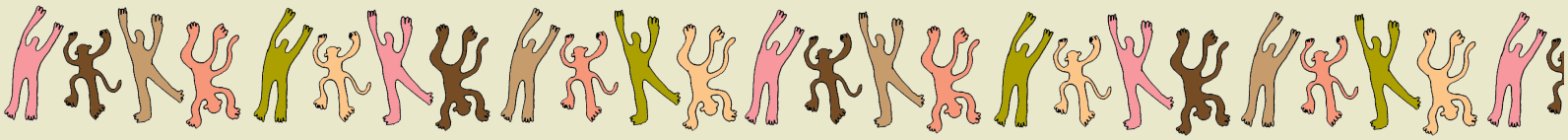
- Not everyone who *says* they are clean really is! Get tested and have your partners get tested as well! This is a great idea for a date.
- You can help end the shame that often comes with having STDs. Getting tested should be an act of pride, not shame—and it promotes an open dialogue about STDs.
- Wear protection! Male and female condoms and dental dams are all great options. Remember, birth control does not protect you from STDs.
- Anybody who has oral, anal or vaginal sex or genital skin-to-skin contact with another person can get STDs.

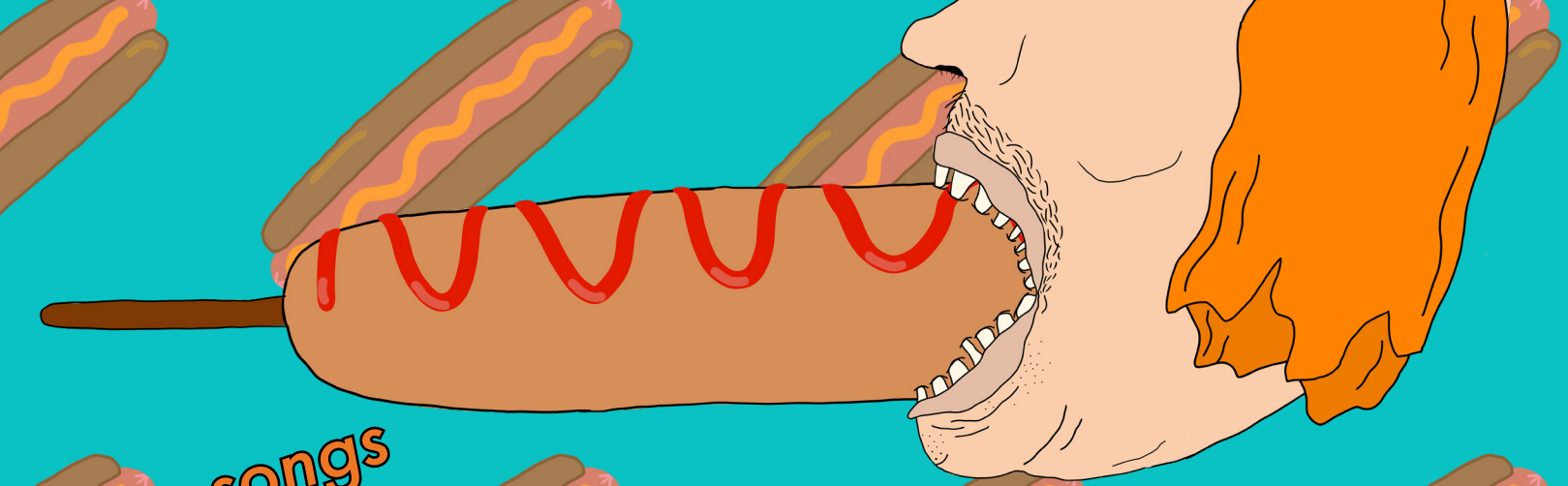
For more information here are a few great online sources!

- https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn
- https://medlineplus.gov/sexuallytransmitteddiseases.

words **EMILY ROBINSON**

art **ANNA BALDWIN**

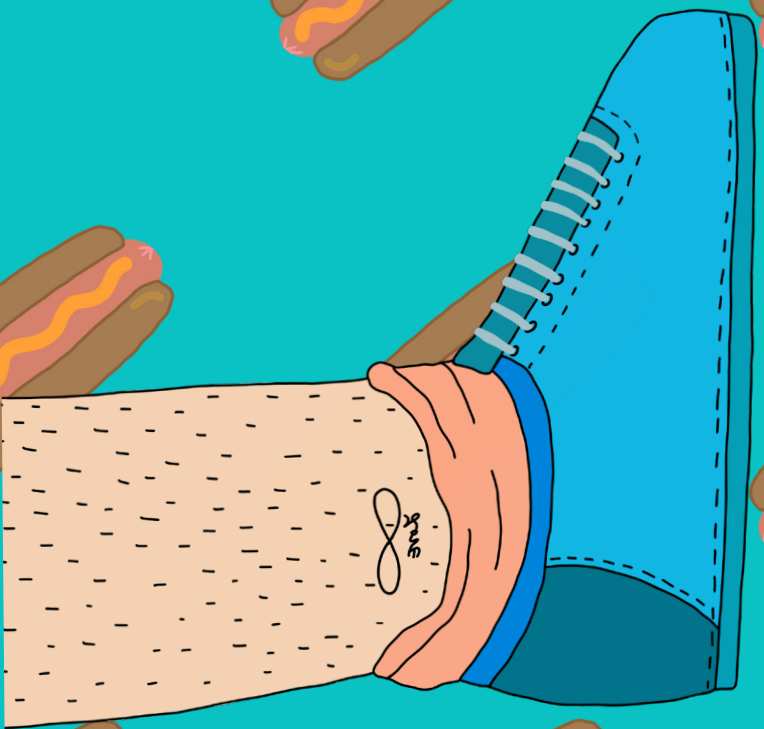




songs

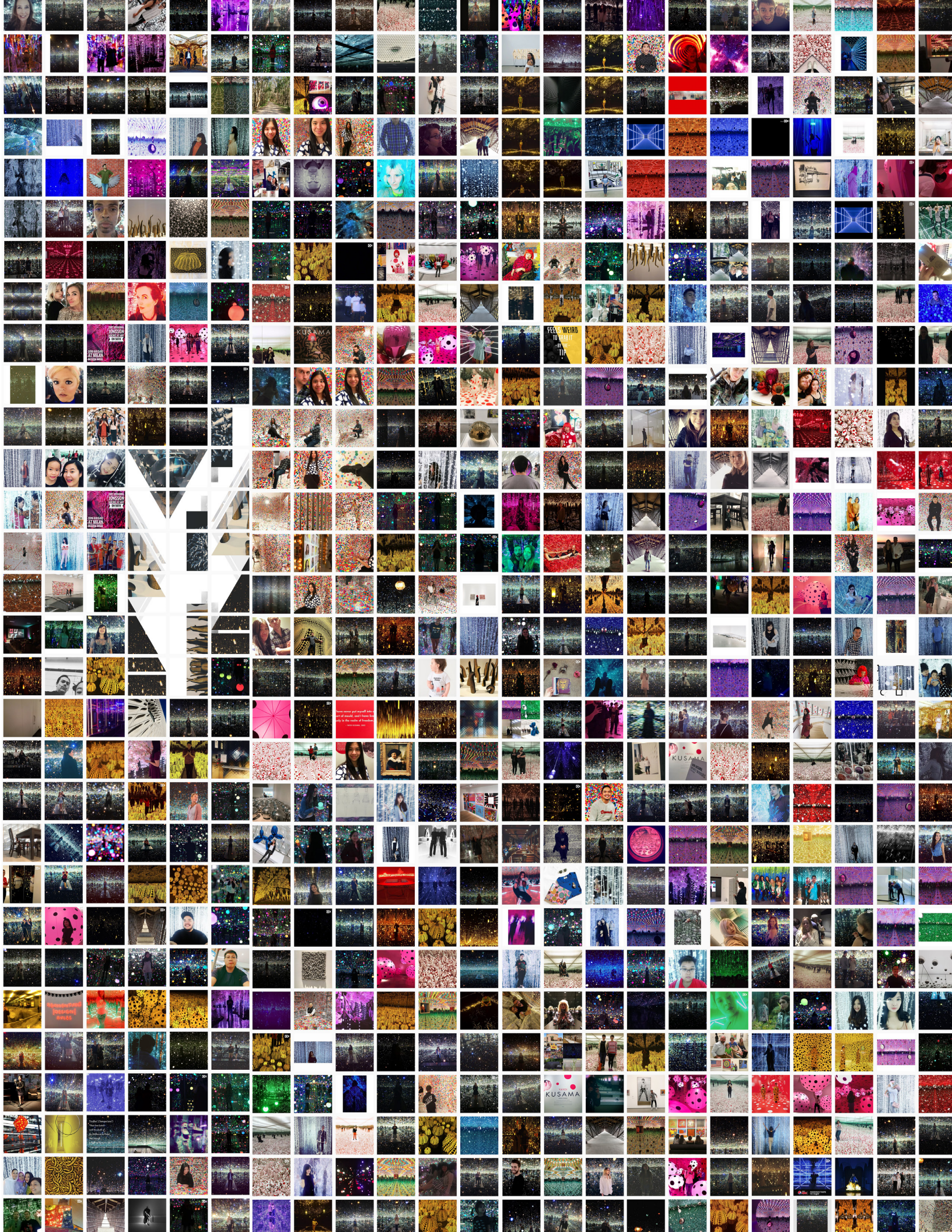
Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God) - Kate Bush
Desire Lines - Deer Hunter
Star Roving - Slowdive
Sex Tourists - French Kicks
Sutphin Boulevard - Blood Orange
Elevators (Me & You) - OutKast
Roadrunner - The Modern Lovers
A Well Respected Man - The Kinks
Just Like Honey - The Jesus and Mary Chain
Missing - Beck
Blend - Aldous Harding
I'll Be Your Mirror - The Velvet Underground

Linger - The Cranberries
Ballad of Big Nothing - Elliot Smith
Over My Head - Fleetwood Mac
Punky's Dilemma - Simon and Garfunkel
Let's Go Away For Awhile - The Beach Boys
Cherry Coloured Funk - Cocteau Twins
This Must Be The Place - Talking Heads
Where'd All The Time Go? - Dr. Dog
Kaputt - Destroyer
Wakin on a Pretty Day - Kurt Vile
Bum Bum Bum - Cass McCombs



Scan the code for the full playlist

playlist **HANNAH SMULAND**
art **LANEATE VANG**


KUSAMA

Oregon Voice

infinite issue

[1] OREGON VOICE–FROM 1989 TO INFINITY

[2] My house at the time I started the book was perched between Burrito Boy and Mill Race, which, as I have recently discovered, was dug to provide energy to Eugene residents before we were on the grid. That house sucked ass.

[3] Three letter acronym for "Very Long Time."

[4] "Three Letter Acronym."

[5] In the absolute nicest way possible, I do think that there are certain comparisons between the three— unemployed, sort of crazy, maybe a little bit addicted to drugs.

[6] If nothing else, everybody knows three things about Infinite J: it's 1) long and 2) hard to read but 3) does look impressive on a bookshelf for precisely the first two reasons. I've heard it makes good use holding up a space heater, but I have no such experience with it myself.

[7] Since you're obviously curious, I bought the book at Smith Family bookstore when I had just moved into my house, the summer between my freshman and sophomore year. I was unemployed and in pretty rough shape. I had virtually no clothes, no decorations, no possessions, but did have Infinite Jest. It was on the floor of this small bedroom that I first started reading. I felt myself starting to go crazy so I put the book down for a couple years, associating it with a weird time in life.

[8] For some reason I cannot fathom, he decided to write two dissertations.

[9] TLA, cont.

[10] Probably just the first stage of grieving.

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